PAUL
CAMPAIGNER FOR CHRIST

WILLIAM J. LOWSTUTER

6434 20

Nana Nagera.
901 Chestnut St
Coshocton
Ohio.

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Paul, Campaigner for Christ

A course of study for the Epworth League

W. J. LOWSTUTER

(Professor in The Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado)

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To
L. M. L.

PREFACE

The church is very rich in her heritage of noble men and women who have, by their lives and teachings, passed on the word of life from age to age and from land to land. It is wisdom on her part to put and to keep her younger sons and daughters in touch with this heritage. For the young Christian there is great instruction, great culture, and great inspiration in knowing these men and women who for the Kingdom's sake wrought so nobly and so well. Such study should give a clear conception of how the gospel came to us, what its great teachings are and what its power for personal living and for social needs. It should also emphasize how rich is our heritage in the gospel and inspire the desire to have part in carrying on the work. The church has known no nobler son of the gospel than Paul. No other man has had a greater significance in church history. No other has had so great a part in determining the character of Christianity and bringing her to her own. "To know him is a liberal education." He was her first great thinker, her first writer. He first saw the significance, character and import of the gospel, put it into the phrase of the world and made it the world's possession. In his own personal experience and his devotion to his Lord, he bears a testimony well

calculated to lead others into higher character and better service. If this little book should succeed in bringing him within reach of our Epworth Leaguers, make him a reality to them and secure him as a personal acquaintance for them, it shall have fulfilled the coveted desire and the best hope of The Author.

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Paul, Campaigner for Christ

I. PAUL—A CITIZEN OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

A Man of His Own Age.

Paul the Man. The purpose of this study is not so much to play the part of hero-worshipers and burn incense at the shrine of our favorite saint as it is to get better acquainted with a man who said of himself that he was of like passions with ourselves[1]. He comes to us as Saint Paul and a saint he was but not a saint in any artificial sense of the word that would remove him from the midst of his fellow workers or exclude him from the company of men. While he "walked in the spirit" his feet were upon the earth and there they must be kept if he is to be known in his rightful significance and true character. It is no lack of reverence for his greatness and his goodness that refuses thus to place him upon a pedestal and that insists upon his being treated as a man. His converts at Corinth, Philippi, and elsewhere, to whom he meant so much, knew him and loved him as a man, a personal friend; they came into direct contact with him as with other men; they had opportunity to know him at first-hand, to watch him at work, to observe his winning power over

[1]Acts 14:15.

men, to touch his daily life and to decide what part he and his gospel should have in their own lives. They might, in their enthusiasm for him and his work, call him an angel of God[2] but that did not blind them to the fact that he came to them a poor, sick, traveling evangelist, repulsive to the sight; neither did it hinder some of them afterward from taking sides with his enemies against him. It is our persuasion, that the more nearly we can come to know him as these converts and friends knew him, the more entirely we can lay aside the halo and the trappings of the saint with which tradition has been all too ready to invest him and cover up the man, the greater will be our chance and likelihood of rediscovering the real Paul. Thus, too, may we hope to come more nearly into actual contact with this great personality, gain the secret of his power, learn the gospel he preached, and receive that inspiration and help from his life and experience which they can give.

Man of His Own Age. In order to gain this closer acquaintance, it must be clearly recognized and constantly kept in mind that Paul was a man of his own age and world. Centuries since, has he become a citizen of the world at large, a man of the ages. This is apt to blind us to the fact that he was a citizen of the first century and of the Roman Empire and belonged to his own day and world. He used the language, wore the garb, conformed to the customs of that day and world.

[2]Gal. 4:14.

That age gave him his education, offered him its culture, shared with him its thoughts, beliefs, and ideals. If he talked, preached, or wrote, he must needs do so in the tongue of the age, else he would not be understood. What more natural than that his thoughts, teachings, method of work, and manner of life should all be colored by this age and world to which he belonged? Why is it any more strange that he should share the beliefs of his day in demons and spirits or sympathize with his age in regard to women's rights than that he should be found wearing sandals, turban, and the burnous of the Oriental? As a matter of fact, his letters contain many references to current thought and customs which can be explained only in relation to the age.

Need to Know His World.

Every man must be studied and understood in connection with his own age; the time and surroundings may not account for his personality but they do throw a great light upon it and also upon his work and the way in which he did his work. If a man's work is to be successful, it must be adapted to those among whom he works; adapted to their needs and their ability, brought within their grasp and phrased in a tongue they understand. The advance from what is known to what is to be taught or from existing conditions to the improvement desired must be made with particular reference to each case. Missionary methods well suited to India might not work at all in Alaska

and methods effective in our own age might have failed to win the day in the first century. Hence, the necessity, if we are to come to a better understanding of Paul and his work, of becoming acquainted with the age and world in which he lived and worked. Such information will be most helpful and furnish a correct background on which to interpret and study the campaigner and his campaigns.

Paul, an Ancient. First of all, Paul belonged to the ancient world: most of the cities he visited in his busy travels are only names now or known to the light of day only as they have been uncovered by the spade of the excavator. When he wrote letters, like any other letter-writer of the day, he used not pen and paper but a stilus and papyrus or parchment. He sent for his friend Timothy to bring him his "books,[3] especially the parchments" from Troas, which, however, were not the product of a printing-press but of hand-work. His place of worship was a synagogue, where the women sat on one side, the men on the other; where women were veiled and men retained their head coverings. Yes, he belonged to the first century world and it was quite different from our own; the great inventions that have practically revolutionized the life of the world were then utterly unknown. Railways, ocean grey-hounds, daily newspapers, and the wonders of electricity and modern science have wrought magically to give us

[3] 2 Tim. 4:13.

a new age. To our age, Paul is a "live-wire," what would the expression have meant to Timothy or Titus? So words, terms, phrases, thoughts, customs have changed color and tone, taken on new meanings, and received new content. Hence the probability that a letter written then might not be readily intelligible to us and, hence, the need of our acquaintance with that age that we may understand it and its message to us.

An Oriental. Paul's world was the Orient and he himself an Oriental; he was born and passed all his years in the countries round about the Mediterranean. Little wonder would it be if there were elements in his disposition, methods in his thoughts, and tricks in his speech that a Westerner could not readily understand. As a child of the Orient, we should expect in him vivid imagination, intense emotion, an alert interest in the mystical, and a keen susceptibility to the hidden things of the inner life. The East was full of religious systems, wisdoms, mysteries, cults, in connection with which all kinds of religious practices were associated; an alert mind like Paul's could not fail to be greatly interested in all these religious movements and, to some extent at least, to have his own religious pulse affected by them. How could he escape asking the value and truth of their systems and practices? Would they have nothing to contribute to his own religious life and thought? His acquaintance with them gave him great advantage when he came to replace them with the gospel.

The Roman World. His world was the Roman Empire. Success had followed Roman arms until the nations, one after another, had been gathered into one great world-empire. The Roman soldier was the policeman of the world; Roman officials administered affairs in every city; Roman law was supreme; and Rome itself the court of last appeal. To carry on her wars, prosecute her conquests, maintain her rule, it was necessary for her to open highways both by land and sea for the easy and speedy transport of her troops and the safe and hasty conduct of her government. Thus the empire was covered by a great network of fine roads; and many vessels plied the seas from port to port. These facilities for the expeditious moving of her troops offered the same opportunity to the merchantman who sought a market for his wares, for the traveler who would see the world, and for the scholar who would study in foreign cities. Travel, thus made easy and secure, became quite general. "Paul the Traveler," as Ramsay facetiously calls him, was only one of thousands who availed themselves of the speed and security offered by Roman roads and the protection of Roman law to travel freely from one end of the empire to the other. The hardships encountered in his gospel labors were all too hard as they were; we can only shudder as we wonder how they would have been increased had Rome not thus providentially lessened the danger and strain of travel. Certainly his work would have been greatly

limited. Rome little dreamed as she built her roads for her conquering cohorts that she was thus making possible the spread within her borders, all unheralded, of a power that was eventually to claim her captive.

A Roman Citizen. Paul was a Roman citizen, a fact of which he was evidently very proud and which contributed no little to his ministry; it afforded him protection of Roman law, secured him against such shameful punishment as scourging and crucifixion and gave him the right of "appeal to Cæsar," the imperial court. In more than one instance did his citizenship stand him in good stead[4]. It meant vastly more, though, than mere protection. He caught the Roman outlook, learned to think in terms of empire. "There had passed into his nature something of the Roman constructiveness, the practical sense of economic facts, the power of seeing the means to reach an end in the world of reality and humanity, the quickness to catch and use and mold the ideas and ideals of the citizen of the Empire."[a] Perhaps it was the Roman Empire with its wide borders, splendid organization and wondrous power over the nations, that first inspired in him the thought that Christianity should become a great world-power. Living in the empire he must realize that the world was of larger horizon than "the promised land" and catch some suggestion of the value of the Gentile world and its meaning to God. It was an

[4]Acts 22:25; 25:11. [a]Ramsay, "Pauline Studies."

imperial vision which showed him that all the nations belonged to God, that the gospel's field was the world and that Christianity was not to be a narrow Jewish sect but a world-religion. The vision did not come from Palestine!

A Greek World. The world was under Roman law but it was none the less also under sway of Greek thought and culture. Rome had become the master of the world only in turn to become captive to Greek civilization. In the realm of philosophy, literature, education, the Greeks were the masters of the day; Antioch, Tarsus, Alexandria, Athens, were all seats of Greek universities. Whether Paul ever attended it or not—and we have no evidence that he did—it was no insignificant matter that his boyhood was spent in a city, the center of Greek culture and instruction—a university city. The Greek language was the language of the empire; practically, it was as good as the native tongue in every country into which Paul carried his campaigns. Any missionary will testify what an incomparable advantage it was for him in his work thus to be equipped with a tongue intelligible to the people to whom he would go. If Roman law gave him a citizen's right in every part of the empire, the Greek language veritably made him at home in every part because he used the mother tongue. When Peter went abroad to preach, he, tradition says, must needs take with him as interpreter John Mark, who like Paul, was a Hellenist, i. e., a Greek-born Jew. Paul was his own

spokesman. In Greek, too, he wrote his letters; how thoroughly Greek was the speech of the empire is intimated in the fact that when Paul wanted to write to a Latin Church, Rome, he wrote in Greek. There is no need for pointing out the many traces of Greek thought and many references to Greek life and customs in his letters; that is just what would be expected. Then, it follows, that the study of Paul and his letters will be greatly illuminated by a closer knowledge of Greek culture and civilization.

The Jew. The Roman Empire might well be called a "melting-pot." Men from how many nations were being brought together to influence, each in his own way, and help determine the ultimate life of the empire. The Roman and the Greek both had place and part; neither dominated to the exclusion of the other. For our study, no citizen was of greater significance than the Jew. Then as now the Jews were a scattered people; their home country was Palestine, it is true, but the larger number was distributed the world over; centuries before they had been carried away captive and had never been thoroughly restored; later, they had been drawn abroad by business and other interests. Already, a century before Paul's day, we are told that "every land and sea was full of Jews." "It is hard to find a place in the habitable earth that hath not admitted this tribe of men and is not possessed by it." In Egypt alone, Philo says, a million Jews could be found. Wherever they went they were

always a distinctive, "a peculiar people." The mark of their peculiarity was their religion. The tenacity and faithfulness with which the Jew has clung to his religion is without parallel. Among all the religions of antiquity, the Jewish religion alone survived the downfall of its nation; Judaism, too, was the sole religion to withstand successfully the attack of Greek skepticism which overwhelmed the nations round about. The Jew, as a citizen or subject of the empire, was subjected all too often to contempt and hatred, due most largely to his exclusiveness. He also invited much trouble for himself by his display of open scorn and contempt both for idolatry and idolators, growing out of his own religious advancement over his neighbors. The liberal policy of Rome toward its conquered peoples, however, gained many concessions for the Jew and secured for them liberty to practice their highly prized religious peculiarities. They had a legal standing which gained them jurisdiction over their own people, trial according to their own laws within certain restrictions, control of property, exemption from military service, protection in Sabbath observance, etc. Their jurisdiction over their own people and property made possible their attendance at the feasts[5] at Jerusalem and also the collection of the temple-tax which the Jews of the Dispersion sent annually to Jerusalem. It finds confirmation in the fact that the Sanhedrin could empower Saul to go

[5]Acts 2.

to Damascus to hunt out heretics.[6] As in Paul's case, many of the families of the Dispersion kept up the Hebrew tongue, even though their daily speech was, necessarily, Greek. Their Scriptures had been translated into Greek several generations before Christ, into what is commonly known as the Septuagint, the version said to have been made by "the Seventy Interpreters." Thus, their Scriptures were made accessible to those Jews who did not keep up their Hebrew tongue and also to all Gentiles who cared to know them. Not only so; they built houses of worship, synagogues, where they could assemble to hear these Scriptures read and expounded, to receive instruction in the faith and keep in touch with the great temple and the religious authorities at Jerusalem. "More than 150 synagogues of the imperial period are known to us. These modest Jewish synagogues up and down the Hellenistic world were a silent and, the history of religion tells us, extremely effective protest against the worship of images by the polytheistic pagans."*b* In this way were they spreading their religion broadcast. They were zealous missionaries; they "compassed sea and land to make proselytes."[7] The synagogues were open to Gentile visitors and were unquestionably centers of religious interest and power; Sabbath by Sabbath, great numbers were attracted in every city and, through the work of the synagogue, many prose-

[6]Acts 26:11, 12. *b*Deissmann, "St. Paul."
[7]Matt. 23:15.

lytes were won to an open avowal of Judaism and a vastly greater number were being enlightened in the superior revelation and truer religious teaching of the Jews. Among those who had come under the influence of the synagogue in this way Paul found a fertile seed-plot for the gospel truth; many of his first converts were from this group.

Jewish Preparation for Christianity. No other one fact contributed so much toward the preparation of the world for the gospel as did Judaism; Christianity's debt to the religion of the Jews must never be overlooked or depreciated. The gospel roots in Judaism. The New Testament is built upon the Old Testament. The religious teaching which the Jews were spreading like leaven through the empire was of the highest type. Its noble conception of God, exalted moral precepts, high ethical ideals, and pure worship were the finest men had known. Other peoples had sensed the truth of one God; no other had offered the world a God of such sublime character and beauty. No other religious teachers had refined the conception of worship and religion as had the prophets. The place of Judaism would still be first as a contributor to Christianity even if she had given nothing more than this high moral conception of God and her insistence that religion is not to be defined in rites and ceremonies but in proper moral relations between God and men and between men and men.

A Religious Age. When Paul said "Men of Athens, in all things I perceive you are very religious,"[8] he was not indulging in mere pleasantry; it was true both of Athens and of the age at large. Some pictures of the age paint it only in the darkest colors; Paul himself[9] uses somber shades very freely and has much to say about the seamy side of the world; but that it "was degenerate, morally corrupt, and, as regards religion, a bankrupt world into which the gospel came" is not true to the facts in the case. The gloomy background belongs, no doubt, to the picture; the age was low; but there were also some brighter colors to relieve the darkness.[10] It had not lost its seekers after God. It was not a religious age according to our standards. There is abundance of evidence to show that the interest in religion was most active. Temples were everywhere; votive columns and pillars to the gods were constantly being dedicated; religious inscriptions are more freely unearthed than any other; the papyri and other literary remains that are being saved for us from the sandhills of Egypt and elsewhere bear the clearest witness to the large part religious thought and life played in that day.

Failure of Old Religions. It was an age of the breaking up of old religions and departure from ancestral faiths. Rome in its organization of the empire had done much toward this end. She had broken down the old national bar-

[8]Acts 17:22. [9]Rom. 1 and 2. [10]Rom. 2:14, 15; Acts 17:23.

riers and compelled, in many ways, the peoples to mingle more freely than of old. That men of different parts might be drafted in a common service, they must be allowed to retain their religious practices and beliefs. The Roman army was a veritable medley of religious beliefs. Out of this grew the tolerant religious policy of Rome that made possible the spread and comparison of the various faiths and cults. "The blending of deities and the migration of gods from east to west and from west to east has long been recognized as a sign of strong religious excitement." As they came into contact and comparison, their folly and weakness would be exposed, their superstition brought to light, their superior points thrown into relief; much would be lopped off, much grafted on, one from the other. The spread of intelligence and advance in intellectual pursuits also contributed largely to the passing of the old faiths; before the growing light of reason, the old religions gave way; their crudities were more and more apparent and became more and more offensive to the increasing moral light; the old stories of the gods were no longer palatable; the gods themselves fell into disrepute with thinking men. These things no longer satisfied; they could not command either respect or faith; they had no answer for man's great moral need nor for the hunger of his inner life. Men had outgrown their old gods. Their philosophies and wisdoms contained much valuable and worthy truth but knew nothing about a "God who cared for men or would

redeem them." So, we are told, the old religions were decadent and the old faiths in decay; we must be careful, however, to distinguish between the decadence of the old religions and a lack of religious interest. The very fact of discontent with the old, the fall of Roman gods and the failure of Greek philosophy is, in itself, an evidence of the vital strength and stirring presence of religious life. Men had simply lost faith in the old religions; they had not, by any means, ceased to be religious. It was ready, by reason of its discontent with the old and its unanswered longings after the eternal, for something better. The age was full for the coming of the gospel.

The Poor. It is a matter of common information that the gospel's first great triumphs were among the lower classes; it claimed some rich, noble, well born; the body of first believers, however, was made up mainly from the lower classes and many were slaves. This can be readily understood when we learn that the great masses of the Roman Empire were poor and, for the most part, very poor; the wealth belonged to a few; the common people were exploited to provide the funds necessary to carry on the empire's campaigns and maintain her rule. If wealth increased, it meant no general prosperity; it swelled only the coffers of the empire or of the mighty and the rich. The people at large were poor. "Athens had eighty thousand free citizens and four hundred thousand bondmen." Three fourths of the population of the

empire either were slaves or had been. To such hearers, in whose lives belonged so little of hope, gladness, or comfort, came the gospel. Small wonder if in them it found a hearty and ready response to its wonderful message of hope and its promise both of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

Prepared for Gospel. One result of this survey is to point out that the gospel did not come into the world at an inopportune time, that Paul did not prosecute his campaigns for Christ in unprepared territory. The age was strikingly ready for the man and his gospel. Roman law and Roman roads lent swiftness and security to the apostle and enabled him to speed the gospel faster and farther; Roman religious tolerance made the coming of a new religion like Christianity into the empire more readily possible. The Greek language and culture furnished the gospel a practically universal tongue in which to publish the offer of salvation to the world. The Jew with his Bible, his synagogue, and his untiring missionary work had done great things in breaking down the strongholds of polytheism and preparing the way for the one true God and the Christ whom he had sent. The Gentiles had failed, through priest and philosopher alike, to find their way to God and, to this extent, were open to the new evangel which knew the way to the true and living God. The poor, neglected classes, all too often the mere sport and chattel of the ruling class, were like empty vessels waiting to

be filled with the gospel's wine of joy and gladness. Then, too, the heart of mankind, "incurably religious" and striving in every way to satisfy this religious instinct, was ready to give eager hearing and furnish many converts to a Saviour who offered to enter into fellowship with men and make them, in present reality, the sons of God.

A Prepared Man. Into a world thus prepared, God called the great apostle, to carry on his campaigns and make conquests for his Christ. He came to his work as a man of his own age; he spoke to it in its own tongue, used its own logic and methods of dealing with men; otherwise, he could not have hoped for success. He had to make himself understood, bring his message within their reach, adapt the gospel to their need and enforce it with the logic, illustration, and persuasion that would bring it home and, under the Spirit's presence and power, gain recruits for Christ. He was peculiarly adapted and prepared for his task, "a chosen vessel to bear my name before the Gentiles."[11] He was heir of the Jewish faith, the world's best religious thought; he was a Jew of the Dispersion, born far from the ancestral land; he was a Roman citizen; he was reared amid Greek surroundings and must have come into contact with and, to some extent, under the influence of Greek thought and culture; as no Palestinian Jew could, he understood the Gentile world, knew its customs and manners, could the better deal with it and sym-

[11]Acts 9:15.

pathize with it; as Dan Crawford might say, he *could think Gentile.* It was no accident that a man so peculiarly prepared for the task, should, after he had come into his own great experience in Christ, become the apostle to the Gentiles. Perhaps had he been born in Palestine, he might have become the apostle to the Gentiles; but one thing is certain, he would not have been so well adapted to the work nor so efficiently equipped for it.

Paul's Greatness. In thus putting Paul in connection with his own century, in indicating that he was subject to its limitations, in showing him debtor both to former ages and to his own age for much help in his work, we do not detract from his greatness or his originality. After all such concessions have been made, he is still the outstanding figure in gospel history; his service to the Christ and the gospel rank him alone; he is the great campaigner whose glory it was to save the gospel from being lost as a Jewish sect and who carried it and established it from Jerusalem to the heart of the empire. By knowing his age and his world better, and by keeping him in touch with it, we see more clearly how to measure his greatness; we place ourselves in position the better to understand and appreciate him and we gain a clearer idea how the things of God are wrought, how God uses men for the accomplishing of his purpose and thus we learn the better to make our own lives more effective in the service of God.

I. SUGGESTED READINGS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

Read: Acts 14: 8-18; 17:16-31; Rom. 1:14-25.

Hall: Historical Setting of the Early Gospel. Chap. I "The World Then and Now."

Deissmann: St. Paul. Chap. II "The World of St. Paul."

(1) What advantage in knowing Paul's age and world?

(2) How did the Roman Empire help prepare for the Gospel?

(3) Discuss debt of Christianity to Judaism.

(4) How was the world "prepared for the coming of the gospel"?

(5) Illustrate Paul as Roman, Greek, and Jew.

II. PAUL—A SON OF THE LAW AND ITS DEFENDER.

How He Became a Persecutor of the Christians.

Our Sources. For all direct personal information concerning Paul, we are dependent entirely upon the New Testament. There, our sources of information are, first, the book of Acts, written, as is generally conceded, by his friend and physician, Luke, and, second, the thirteen letters which bear the name of Paul. Of the book of Acts, the only narrative of events coming from the apostolic age, Paul is the undisputed hero. Grateful may we well be to the friend who has put into our possession so many facts in regard to the apostle's life and work. The primary source of acquaintance with the apostle, however, must be the letters; it is only too obvious that a friend, an occasional traveling companion or fellow worker would not preserve for us such a faithful portrait, such an intimate reflection of the man's inner character and personality as that man would unconsciously give of himself in his own letters.

Home and Family. He was born, not far from the date of Jesus's birth, in Tarsus, in Cilicia, "no mean city," as he proudly said to Claudius Lysias.[1] He boasted of his pure Jewish descent when he called himself a "Hebrew of the

[1] Acts 21:39.

Hebrews."[2] His family was of the tribe of Benjamin[3] and adhered, evidently, most loyally to the tradition of their fathers. It is highly significant that Paul was reared in a religious home. We are constrained to believe that the household religion was of the austere type, that the boy was rigidly trained in religious matters and that, consequently, his boyhood had more of the stern and severe in it than of childish brightness and joy.[4] We may be sure this devout mother and father did all for their lad that could be done for any Jewish boy. He came of Pharisaic stock, a "Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,"[5] which is as good as saying that he was born with a zeal for all things Jewish in his blood and that the influence of the father's house was such as to deepen this from year to year. Unlike most families of the Dispersion, his family kept up the use of the Hebrew tongue and taught it to the children; thus, he was equipped with at least two languages, Greek and Hebrew, either of which might be called his mother-tongue.[6] As the son of a Jewish family, he was given the name Saul; as a Roman citizen he would have a Roman name, of which Paul is probably only a part. There is only the scantiest reference to his family; the fact that his father before him was a Roman citizen implies a family of some position; whether it was a family of any wealth or influence, whether there were other children we cannot say save for the mention, years

[2]Phil 3:5. [3]Phil. 3:5; Rom. 11:1.
[4]Phil. 3:5, 6; Acts 26:5. [5]Acts 23:6. [6]Acts 22:2.

later, of a married sister then living in Jerusalem.[7] This silence concerning his family—never once in his letters does he mention his family—has been variously accounted for. It has been suggested that when he became a Christian his proud Pharisaic family, scandalized at the son's apostasy, discarded him and drove him out penniless to follow the Nazarene. This is a reasonable suggestion but lacks confirmation; perhaps there was no particular occasion to make mention of his family in his letters.

Boyhood. There is no reason at all for believing that Paul was different from other Jewish boys of Tarsus. In his home he would receive the discipline peculiar to his people; but, no matter how carefully trained at home or how carefully protected against pagan influence, he must come more or less under the influence of the life round about him, learn the language of the streets and the city—the Greek—and be affected by the sights and sounds on every hand. Like any normal, wide-awake lad he would come into touch with the life of the great city and become acquainted with it; doubtless he did as other boys and, like them, found the school of experience a good place for learning human nature and the ways of men. He would become acquainted with Gentile habits, customs, ways of looking at things; acquire familiarity with the life of other people and gain some

[7] Acts 23:16.

insight into the fact that the Gentiles held other beliefs and faiths than his "own people."

Tarsus. The city of Tarsus was a prosperous and popular city, well calculated to develop in a boy a sense of loyal pride in his native city, such as Paul afterward showed. Its life was quite cosmopolitan and offered those influences which would contribute later toward preparing Paul for his world-vision and for his work among the nations. Here was located one of the great Greek universities of the day; the probability, however, is that Paul was never a student in it. It is easy and very misleading to ascribe to the apostle width of learning and acquaintance with Greek literature and philosophy which find no confirmation in his writings. "The crowning glory of Tarsus, the reason for its undying interest to the whole world, is that it produced the Apostle Paul; that it was the one city which was suited by its equipoise between the Asiatic and Western spirit to mold the character of the great Hellenist Jew."[a] In one sense of the word, as a result of his boyhood impressions, when he went to the Gentiles, he went to his own.

At Feet of Gamaliel. Whatever training he may have received in Tarsus, his education proper was received in Jerusalem "at the feet of Gamaliel,"[8] one of the most popular and best revered rabbis of the day. Just when he was sent to Jerusalem to pursue his studies cannot be definitely stated; presumably, when he was about thir-

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*a*Ramsay. [8]Acts 22:3.

teen, for shortly after this it was definitely fixed by law that a Jewish boy should become "a son of law" at that age. When he said, "My manner of life from my youth know all the Jews,"[9] he implied plainly that he had come there when only a boy and had spent most of his time there since, so that there were many in the city who could testify as to his rearing and what kind of a man he was. It is not safe to infer from his being sent to Jerusalem for his training that his family had wealth. It is possible his sister was already settled there and gave the boy a home. The rabbis, according to an unwritten law, were not in the habit of charging a regular tuition but were repaid as the ability and condition of the student allowed; hence, the matter of expense involved in his education could have been very small. Much more significant for the character of his home and family is the fact that they were not content to have him trained in one of the very good rabbinical schools nearer home, Antioch, for instance. What an advantage for the lad to go to Jerusalem! There was the Holy City about which the people's dearest traditions clung; there "the elders" of greatest renown, such as Hillel and Schammai, propounded the Law and the Prophets; there was the holy temple so sacred and so fascinating to every Jewish heart. How glad would he be to go up to the house of Jehovah! With what stirring of heart would he come to the city of

[9]Acts 26:4.

David! For the training of a young rabbi no place could vie with Jerusalem in advantage or in inspiration.

Why a Rabbi? Who decided the boy should be a rabbi? Or what led to such suggestion? Was it the result of family ambition or the expression of the father's own devotion? Was it the natural outcome of the household life and training? It is a fine thing for a young preacher to kindle his enthusiasm for the work of God at the family hearthside. Perhaps there was something about the lad himself, an early interest in religious matters, a childish devotion to Scriptures, a sensitiveness to questions of the inner life, of conscience and of righteousness that inclined him to such decision and that indicated to his family what training the boy should be given. We may not say; our data is too meager; one thing is clear—Paul afterward regarded it as providential and saw in it the leading of God.[10]

A Trained Man. Of another thing may we be certain, namely, that in choosing this lifework, the first consideration was not something easy or quickly prepared for. They knew in advance that for no other work among their people was a more thorough training required. How long Paul stayed in Jerusalem is not told us: if he completed the prescribed course for rabbinical study, he must have stayed at least twelve years. Com-

[10]Gal. 1:13-16.

pared with modern educational ideals, there was much in his education to criticise, both in regard to what he was taught and how he was taught. One ideal of the system, however, was most commendable; the training must be thorough and complete according to its own standards; neither time nor labor was to be spared; the office of rabbi was great and was to be greatly magnified by thorough preparation. He could not hope to take up the full work of a rabbi or be allowed to teach as head of a school before he was forty years of age and was able to reproduce the entire traditional Law. So, Paul came to his work a trained man. It has always been from trained men that leaders have come and no small part of the apostle's equipment for leadership was his tedious, painstaking, diligent training in the years at the feet of Gamaliel.

Course of Studies. In his course of studies no place would be found for philosophy, art, literature, or such science as was then taught in the contemporary schools of neighboring nations like Greece or Egypt; neither would any attention be given history save that of his own people; civil law would be treated to a limited extent. The instruction was exclusively religious and confined to a study of the Law and the Prophets and the interpretation of same which had grown up through the years. Rhetoric, oratory, logic, and such subjects as might be necessary to the study and teaching of the Law were also included. The method of studying the Scriptures did not proceed upon a

historical or literary basis nor did it aim to train students to think through the same in a clear, analytical, reasonable way, so as to relate them to their age and to find their evident thought and revelation. On the contrary, the student's work consisted mainly in simply committing to memory passages from the Scriptures and then "the tradition of the elders" concerning the same. In other words, their thinking had been done for them; their work was not to think but to accept, commit to memory and repeat what their fathers had bequeathed them. The method dwarfed the reasoning faculties and smothered the imagination, while it developed wonderful power of memory. The forms and methods of interpretation were hard set and prescribed. The only chance for originality was through the allegorical method, which was the most prominent and the most popular method of interpretation then current. According to this method, a passage was not to be taken literally, at its face value, for its apparent statement or in its historical setting or meaning; it was to be treated as an allegory, whose real meaning and value were hidden and mystical and to be figuratively developed. Attaching mysterious significance to every detail and torturing every passage into strange meanings, they were able to arrive at such amazing conclusions as that "Israel is sinless, holy, and never committed idolatry"; that the "Twelve Patriarchs never meant to murder their brother Joseph"; that "it is only the Proselytes, not the Israelites, who worshiped the

golden calf." With such a method one could prove anything. By the introduction of the allegory, the rabbis were enabled to find a way of escape in dealing with many a passage where the traditional explanation involved difficulty. The allegory allowed more than one interpretation; in fact, there was no limit to the meanings to be attached to a passage by an ingenious and fanciful mind. So they avoided the appearance of irreverence in departing from the tradition of the elders; they retained the old and added to it the new allegorical treatment. Paul was trained in this rabbinical exegesis and freely made use of it; his letters furnish many instances of it.[11]

The Old Testament Student. In the person, works, and teachings of Jesus, Paul and the other apostles, Christianity fell heir to the Jewish Scriptures with all their revelations and culture; without this heritage the gospel could never have had the history it has had. It is a mistake most carefully to be guarded against to suppose that the gospel came as something entirely new and isolated, unrelated to the past, without debt or reference to the past. The truth is that when it started out, it did so with a rich equipment of religious and theological thought, including among other things, the Old Testament, which was the only Scripture the Christians had for several decades. Paul was a most devout and diligent Old Testament student. He knew his Bible. His ac-

[11] 1 Cor. 10:1-4; Gal. 3:16; 4:21-31; etc.

quaintance with it appears at every turn. When he became a Christian, it never occurred to him to give it up or to regard it any less the Word of God. He shared the conviction of his people that it was the peculiar revelation of his God to his people and, never, to the end of his life, did he cease to be a pious student of it.

Debt of Christians to Old Testament. The heritage of Christians therein was a very noble one; it gave them the truth of the one true God. It taught them God had been revealing himself, particularly, to the Chosen People; these revelations written down were regarded as sacred and inspired writings. It dealt with the great religious questions and undertook to tell how a man could be saved. It inculcated zealous devotion to God and his service. It abounded in promise and hopes; above all, it told of a better day and of the coming of a Messiah, who should deliver the nation from its oppressors and realize the fairest dreams of its prophets, priests, and kings. When a man or a cause starts with the idea of monotheism, inspiration, revelation, salvation, and the Messianic hope, he starts with no mean equipment.

Paul's Use of Old Testament Scriptural proof was the greatest proof of the schools; if a thing could be established by Scriptures, its position was well-nigh if not altogether impregnable. No other proof was comparable to it. The early Christians shared this regard for it and their first contribution to Bible study was to find a way

of supporting their new faith by appeal to the Old Testament. They searched the Scriptures diligently[12] for witness to Christ. When the converted Paul wanted to convince that Jesus was the Messiah, he, too, felt the necessity of securing for his gospel the support of the Scriptures; hence, his continual appeal to the Old Testament. No feature of his writings is more characteristic than his use of Scripture-proof. Naturally, he was driven to see new meanings for the old Word; he must adapt it to the new occasion. But his method and procedure was that learned in school; his use of allegory has already been alluded to; in his technical use of the Bible we recognize the student of Gamaliel, though in the light of his revelations in Jesus Christ he found new meanings.

Debt to Pharisees. From "the strictest sect of the Pharisees"[13] he also took lessons in missionary zeal and devotion to a cause. Likewise, through them he was prepared for faith in the resurrection; on several occasions he made appeal to the fact that he shared their belief in the resurrection.[14] With them he shared belief in spirits, angels, demons; theirs, too, was the conception he had of nature, heaven, hell, earth, history, sin, judgment, and many other items of his theological training. Nor is there any evidence that as a Christian, he ever thought it necessary, because of his new experience and belief, to throw overboard these

[12]Acts 17:11. [13]Acts 26:5. [14]Acts 23:6; 26:6-8.

inherited ideas to any great extent. His "heritage from the schools" was great and he did not despise it. It is God's method to use the past in getting men ready for to-morrow's task.

His Trade. Some time before his conversion he learned his trade, weaving Cilician tent-cloth from goat hair. To learn it, he would probably have to return to Tarsus, for the trade was a local one and there would scarcely be any chance to learn it in Jerusalem. His taking a trade bears no reference to his family's position or wealth or to his own prospects; in doing so, he merely complied with an old Jewish custom, which required every youth to learn a trade, no matter what his other work might be. Gamaliel is credited with saying that "learning of any kind unaccompanied by a trade ends in nothing and leads to sin."

Did He Marry? If he followed the custom of his people he would marry when about twenty; whether he did is uncertain; it is to be expected that so zealous a Jew would comply with the expectation of his people, who laid great stress upon family life and had no sympathy with asceticism. On the other hand, it is easy to gain impression from 1 Corinthians 7 and 9 that he did not marry. The most that can be drawn from this, however, is that when it was written he had no wife with him or that it was not his custom to carry a family on his campaigns.

Did He Ever See Jesus? Was Paul in Jerusalem during Jesus's ministry or at the time of his crucifixion? Did he ever see or hear the prophet from Nazareth over whom the religious authorities became so intensely excited, whose miracles and teachings aroused their bitter hatred and whose arrest and death they had been so zealous to secure? The probability is that he did not; for had he done so, he would certainly have made more direct reference to it; he could have used it so effectively in answering some of the attacks of his enemies. True, in 1 Corinthians 9:1 he does say, "Have I not seen the Lord?" That is best construed as referring to his conversion experience.[15] 2 Corinthians 5:16 best satisfies its context if made to refer to a false judgment of Jesus formerly held by Paul, rather than to any acquaintance with Jesus in the days of his flesh.

His Success. Either through family influence or his own personal ability, the young Pharisee was attracting attention and gaining a measure of influence and prominence. He was in the public eye, well enough known to appeal later to his reputation and his success. "I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age."[16] The high priest received him and trusted him.[17] The Sanhedrin recognized him and employed him; it might even be inferred from Acts 26:10 that he was a member of the Sanhedrin and "gave his vote against" Christians condemned by that body. In the

[15]1 Cor. 15:8. [16]Gal. 1:14. [17]Acts 9:1, 2, 14.

opposition that arose against the Christians he took an active part and was soon the acknowledged leader in this work. He was entrusted with the prosecution, being authorized to seek out Christians, try them as heretics, punish them if they would not recant and to carry his persecutions even "to foreign cities."[18] The records intimate that a number were put to death and cities outside Jerusalem visited in these persecutions; but one victim is named for us, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who was not, however, put to death by the Sanhedrin but was the victim of mob violence, being stoned outside the city gate. And only one pilgrimage of persecution is recorded for us, the one to Damascus, which was never completed. However, his reputation as an inquisitor had become notorious and was spread far and wide; in Damascus he was already known and feared as "the one who had done much evil to the Christian saints in Jerusalem."[19]

The Enthusiast. Of all that is preserved for us concerning Paul, nothing is more characteristic of the man, nothing gives a better opportunity to see his real character, or lends more help in understanding him than the fact that he became the persecutor. It was not an impulsive, extravagant outbreak that belied the man's real nature; it was the natural expression of his real character, the outgrowth of his best convictions and of his most inner life. He became the persecutor

[18]Acts 26:10. [19]Acts 9:13, 26; Gal. 1:23.

because he was the kind of man he was, because his interest, his convictions, his enthusiasm, his devotion were what they were; through his persecuting activities these find a direct and reliable expression. Seeking to understand the persecutor, we are on a direct road to know the man. He was thoroughly whole-hearted and whole-souled. His was a positive disposition and a nature strong and intense to the point of violence. He was a natural enthusiast. Half-way measures found no resting-place in his soul. He must be out-and-out in his committal to any person or interest. But enthusiasm is not to be confused with uncontrolled impulse or heedlessness; he did not run riot because he did what he did with all his soul; he was just as conscientious as he was enthusiastic; and as well poised and balanced as he was devoted. When he gave himself to a cause—and he never gave himself without conviction—he enlisted with all his powers. His was a soul that could content itself only in utter devotion, complete abandon; he went into things with all the length, breadth, depth, and height of his passionate being and was not one to haggle or cavil over cost. He would "suffer the loss of all things and count them but refuse"[20] for the cause he loved; yea, he would count not his life dear[21] in behalf of friend or Master, in whom he believed. The craven, calculating spirit was foreign to his make-up; he ventured all and ventured it freely when he took sides. Consequently, he was no mean

[20]Phil. 3:8. [21]Acts 20:24; 21:13.

or trifling persecutor; he went into this work just as he did into others; the same intensity and devotion that characterized his following of the Cross characterized him as an inquisitor. The Christians were scourged, shut up in prison, put to death, compelled to blaspheme. They were to be exterminated like some baneful pest; not even women were to be spared. The evil was to be rooted out before a clean bill of health should be asked or granted. No one will accuse him of compromising measures or mild remedies. The heresy was to be stamped out and the heretics must either blaspheme —recant—or take their punishment.

A Religious Persecutor. Add to what we have just said about him this one other thing—he was a *religious enthusiast.* Every fiber of his being was inflamed with religious ardor. Home training, the heritage of his race, his Pharisaic discipline, all intensified his religious interest; but it was a native passion of his make-up. He had a positive genius for religion and the things of the spirit. They fascinated him and laid his very being under tribute; it showed in his student days, in his "exceeding zeal for traditions of his fathers,"[22] and in the blameless years of his young manhood.[23] He is before and above all else a *religious character.* Those who sit at his feet may expect all their instruction to be taken up in religious interest, the things of God and the inner life. He is a "man of

[22]Gal. 1:14. [23]Phil. 3:6.

one book" and that book begins and ends in religion. Festus went so far as to intimate that he was fanatical on the subject.[24] His whole soul was fired with religious enthusiasm; his whole life absorbed in religious activity. Get a man like that converted and he will be sure to "set the world on fire" or turn it upside down. From religious motives, he took up the cudgels against the Christians. He was a *religious persecutor,* no mere executor or blood-thirsty partisan, but a conscientious, God-fearing man of religion.[25]

Why a Persecutor of the Christians? Whether in Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion or not, he would soon hear of it upon his return. He would also soon come into contact with or hear of the new sect of the Nazarenes who were proclaiming as the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, who had shortly been condemned by the high court of the Jews and publicly put to death as a common criminal. They were insisting that he was risen from the dead and was declared by his resurrection to be the Son of God; they were professing their allegiance to him and, in his name, offering salvation. The zealous young Pharisee was eagerly expecting the Messiah; in school and at home he had heard and learned much of the Messiah and his coming, but these teachings had not told of such a Messiah. They looked for quite a different kind of a Messiah, one who should come in glory and power to redeem

[24]Acts 26:24. [25]Acts 26:9; 1 Tim. 1:13.

Israel, drive out the hated Roman, and bring fulfilment to their dreams of the divine promises. Salvation was of the Jews and through their sacred Law alone they hoped to secure it. Now to be told that the Messiah had already come, manifest in the flesh, that he had been rejected by his own chosen people and shamefully crucified outside the holy city by a Roman governor; to be told that salvation was to be sought not through the Law but through this crucified Messiah was more than the devout soul of Paul could endure. Such teaching was to him madness, blasphemy, heresy; it reduced the holiest hope of the nation to a farce and maligned the nation before the world in proclaiming such an one "King of the Jews." With what horror and revulsion would these things come to the enthusiastic Pharisee "zealous for his sacred tradition"!

The Defender of the Law.

These things meant the virtual negation of all his hopes; they and the Law could not exist together. A crucified Messiah was blasphemy; "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," said the Law; the cross, our gallows, became at once an offense and a scandal that wormed the very heart of the pious Jew. What should he do about it? Should it be longer tolerated that these Christians go on preaching that Jesus was the Messiah and had been nailed to the shameful cross as a Roman criminal? Should they be allowed to preach salvation in his name and thus break down the Law and, with it, all their cherished hopes? For, trusting in Jesus for salva-

tion meant the impeachment of the Law; its holy power was thus shared or divided; it was no longer the sacred oracle of God through which alone a man could hope to be saved. Against such danger must the Law be defended and in defense of the Law, as a champion of its sole power to save and as a guardian of its honor, Paul entered the list of the persecutors. His was the inspiration of the crusader who goes out as his Lord's servant to fight his battles and to maintain his honor. And never did knight ride forth to rescue the tomb of his Lord from the defiling hands of the unbelievers with purer conscience, cleaner motive, or more devoted zeal. With him it was a religious war, a holy war; he went in the name of the Lord. "With what deep pain did the apostle in later life look back on this period of his experience! when the vehemence of his nature, united with all he thought holy, burst out into the flame of a fanaticism which shrank from no means of violence.[26] But then he thought it was a red-letter day in his life when he saw the bleeding body of a Christian lying at his feet, mangled by the stone-throwing mob. Murder for the glory of God is at once the blackest and the greatest thing that men can do for God and the salvation of their fellows, as they understand it. It is a long, a seemingly endless road till we come to the complete surrender of the whole life in the service of God—to the words that baffle even the readiest fanatic:

[26]Gal. 5:11; 1 Cor. 1:23; cp. Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 15:9; Phil. 3:6.

'And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing!' "[b]

The Servant of Jehovah. Thus we understand and account for Paul as the persecutor. There are instances where one can respect, even admire, an opponent. Paul is one of these. He was a dauntless character following his gleam. In all his frightful persecutions he was driven and dominated by the conviction that so was he doing God's will, so could he honor God. He was thoroughly conscientious in it all. He was mistaken, it is true, in his way of thinking, his conscience needed enlightenment and instruction; but it was neither insincere nor untrue. The passion of his soul was to win God's favor; so, like some warrior of old, he buckled on his armor and went forth to battle in his Lord's name and for His honor.

II. SUGGESTED READINGS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

Read: Acts 22:2; 23:16; 26:4-8; Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5; Gal. 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:8; 9:1; 2 Cor. 5:16.

Gilbert: The Student's Life of Paul. Chaps. I and II.

(1) What advantage did Paul have in Roman citizenship?

(2) How did the fact that Paul was a Jew of the Dispersion help prepare for his ministry?

(3) Discuss "spiritual proof."

(4) Why did he persecute the Christians?

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b Weinel.

III. PAUL—THE MAN WITH A GREAT EXPERIENCE.

Converted and Commissioned of Jesus Christ.

Preparation for Conversion. "The day of Damascus" was the great day in Paul's life; out of it came all the issues of his after years. Without it, those years are a closed book and the man himself an enigma; we must know it if we hope to understand him and his work. Probably no story in the New Testament is better known than how he started from Jerusalem a persecutor, armed with letters from the Sanhedrin and reached Damascus a converted man, an apostle of the Christian faith. From the accounts given[1] we could gain the impression that the change took place not only suddenly and unexpectedly but also without any roots in or reference to the past. Sudden and unexpected the experience of the day was; but it was not without preparation or connection with the past. The story itself requires a certain connection with the past; it was not possible without certain preparation. For instance, the very fact of Jesus appearing to Paul in the way and convincing him that he was the Messiah and was risen from the dead, was dependent upon Paul's knowing who Jesus was and the claims that were made for him. The voice said, "I am Jesus," and Paul knew then without further explanation what the vision

[1] Acts 9, 22, 26.

meant. He had heard all about Jesus. Such a great and radical change would naturally be preceded by certain experiences; these would not cause his conversion, and yet, without them, the latter had not come. We mean to say that had not these things entered into his former experience and life, he would not have been prepared to receive "the heavenly vision," much less to have obeyed it; there could not have been the immediate submission, "What shall I do, Lord?"[2] Let us see what experience Paul had had that would help prepare him for the day at Damascus.

Knew About Jesus. First, he knew a very great deal about Jesus. He could not help it. It goes without saying that even if he never saw Jesus personally, many of his friends had seen and heard him; members of the Sanhedrin knew of his trial and were present at his execution. They knew what impression Jesus had made on the populace by his teaching and work. Very reasonably, Paul's first information concerning Jesus came from his own friends, the Pharisees, who were disturbed over the activity aroused in the name of Jesus. What reason for their opposition, unless they knew what his followers were saying about him and felt this significant enough to justify their opposition? It was exactly because they did know so much about Jesus and the power his name was exercising that they opened war on the disciples. Some of the disciples were brought before the San-

[2]Acts 22:10.

hedrin;[3] their only offense was their ministry in the name of Jesus. Through his friends, as well as through his own actual work of persecution, Paul could not avoid learning a great deal about Jesus and what the Christians were teaching about him. It would be absurd on the face of it to accuse such a man of haling men and women to jail, scourging and imprisoning them, without knowing what they were accused of. No, Paul was not the kind of man to engage in such a crusade without a reason for it. Further, the Christians were given a sort of trial or hearing, for he himself says that he "strove to make them blaspheme."[4] During these hearings, he would be compelled, repeatedly, to hear the Christian teachings concerning their Master. His very attempt to make them blaspheme, that is, recant their faith in Jesus, proves beyond question that he knew their claims in regard to Jesus. So familiar was he with the story, that when the vision came there was no need to ask who Jesus was or what he sought; Paul was fully prepared to give answer intelligently to the vision, realizing what the answer involved. From the Christians he had learned to call him "Lord."

Contact with Christians. Second, his contact with Christians played a part in getting him ready for the day of Damascus. His experience as inquisitor extended over considerable time; during this time he had ample opportunity

[3]Acts 4:5; 5:27. [4]Acts 26:11.

not only to hear about Jesus but also to watch the Christians and see what their faith was doing for them. Their daily life was marked with a new power and character; it was filled with gentleness, brotherly love, and a strangely new devotion to others. When the persecutors applied the acid test to their faith what steadfastness, what loyalty, was revealed! Had they yielded to persecution and blasphemed, the story would be different; but they did not. The new faith took such hold on men that they would suffer for it. And how they suffered! not reviling when reviled, but with a patience and forbearance toward their persecutors, yea, a readiness to forgive that was not taught in the schools of the rabbis. They knew a poise and peace that triumphed over fear and suffering; they seemed possessed of God's very presence and power. Finally, Paul saw one put to death, stood by and kept the martyr's clothes, consenting to his death.[5] That triumphant death was a still higher revelation to the soul of the young Pharisee of what Jesus meant to men; he could not be unaffected by such testimony. He could not avoid comparing the Christians with himself. They had a power, a peace, a content, an evidence of God in their experience which he had sought in vain. How could he help wondering whence the source of their power and peace? Was it possible the new faith of the crucified Nazarene could unite men with God as the faith of his fathers failed to do? At least, Paul

[5]Acts 7:58; 8:1.

must recognize the compelling power of the Crucified in the allegiance of the disciples.

His Unsatisfactory Religious Experience. Still another line of preparation for Paul's conversion is to be found in his personality and religious experience. We have already come to know him as preëminently a man of religion, the seeker after God. The quest of his life was to find God and gain his favor. All the fine sentiment of the old Hebrew prophets and poets who longed for and cried out after God, who searched heaven and earth to find him that they might come near unto him, found ready response in the heart of Gamaliel's pupil. As a good Jew he was instructed that there are two grounds on which he might base his claim to God's favor and hope to win salvation. The first was that he belonged to "the chosen people," was a son of Abraham, to whom Jehovah had given the promises so precious to his people.[6] The second was through the keeping of the Mosaic Law. He threw himself upon both and both had failed him; for through neither, as yet, had he found the way to God nor a way of escape from sin and the wrath of God. Thorough Jew that he was and bigoted Pharisee, he had not been able to hide from himself the fact that in his own personal experience, Abrahamic descent, i. e., the mere fact of physical descent, was not sufficient to assure him of Jehovah's favor nor to lift from his stricken soul the sense of guilt. He

[6] John 8:31; Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:16-18.

had hardly recognized or worked the thing out so clearly as he afterward did in Romans and Galatians; perhaps he would not have been willing to acknowledge a thought so disloyal to his traditional faith. None the less, the conviction rankled in his soul and he could not quiet his disturbed conscience and troubled spirit by soothing reminder of Abrahamic parentage. His trust in his pure ancestry was not doing for him what trust in the Crucified was doing for the Christians; he did not know their peace.

Trust in the Law. Neither did trust in the Law realize what he had been led to believe it would do. He trusted it to save him, to justify him, but it only condemned him.[7] The Law was the strength, the very life of Judaism; everything else, worship, sacrifice, prayer, fasting, all had come under its iron yoke. Under it, religion was reduced to a series of minute legal prescriptions and pious observances; its character was purely mechanical; ritual, ceremony, the paying of tithes and other such obligations comprised the whole of religion. Man's relation to God rested upon a strictly legalistic, business basis. It was as though God said—conform to the requirements of the legal code, attend so many services, say so many prayers, keep so many fasts, make so many offerings, perform so many acts of devotion, and, in payment for the same, you may expect salvation; you have earned or bought your salvation. Such legalistic, mechani-

[7]Rom. 7:11-13.

cal conceptions have ever been the bane of religion and have not yet perished from the earth.

The Law Did Not Save. Saul, the ardent seeker after God, studied the law diligently and gave himself unsparingly to its fulfillment. In its keeping he was "blameless,"[8] only to realize the bitter disappointment that through the works of the law he was not justified or saved. Despite his earnest endeavor to keep the law, his vigorous observance of it, his willing sacrifice for it, there came to him no sense of satisfaction, no confidence toward God, no assurance of acceptance for pardon. On the contrary, the law pronounced judgment on him, quickened his sense of guilt and condemned him. So, that which he had trusted in and looked to as his friend and saviour, betrayed him, provoked him to sin and slew him.[9] By its endless restrictions and prohibitions, its "thou-shalt-nots," it really tempted him to many a transgression he would otherwise not have thought of; so it became an "occasion to sin," his enemy to entice him; just as too many paternal rules often provoke sons to go astray. Again, the law failed him as a saviour because it could only set ideals and write commandments, tell a man what he ought to be; it could furnish no help, give no power to realize or obey the same. These ideals and precepts were high and noble but to unaided human endeavor they were hopeless. No one could truly keep the law; before that was possible, God's help must be

[8]Phil. 3:5. [9]Rom. 7:11.

secured and the law brought no help from God; the help of the Spirit was the gospel's gift. All the law did was to show him his hopelessness and to deepen his sense of guilt and condemnation. In the seventh chapter of Romans, we have a glimpse into his own inner struggle under the law, which reveals the helplessness of the Law and the sense of despair it brought into his life. He says he found in his life two principles; one, conscience, drew him toward the good; the other toward evil; the one, his better self, said the law was good and prompted its keeping; the second, hindered him from keeping it. The good attracted him and he would do it but he found himself doing otherwise. He needed a helper and a deliverer.[10] He had failed to fulfill the law—in fact he could not fulfill it nor could any other man in his own strength—and the law passed sentence of death upon him.

Persecution a Forlorn Hope. Isn't it probable that in his persecutions, the outgrowth of his devotion to the cause of God, he saw one more chance to win God's favor and obtain pardon for his guilt? Surely, he could argue, God must be pleased with the punishment of heretics who were profaning his name and blaspheming his sacred truth. Here was an opportunity to appease His wrath and gain His approval. With such motive, his very salvation depending upon it, no wonder he made "havoc of the Church." If in this

[10]Rom. 7:24.

way he could not obtain justification, what other hope for him? We doubt if he ever definitely stated, even to himself, this failure of the traditional means of salvation; his race loyalty was too strong to allow that, perhaps. But, as a fact of experience, it could not be denied; he was not satisfied; he had no sense of being justified before God; the appointed means of salvation left him with only his sense of guilt. Abrahamic descent did not give any arbitrary claim to salvation; the law, to which he had entrusted his soul, had failed him. It had betrayed and slain him. According to the Law, he was a dead man. How could he be saved?

Christian Hopes And yet the Christians were telling that there was another way of salvation; their Lord could save. Their daily life and their conduct under persecution showed that they had something in their lives that he did not have and that his religion could not, at least had not, given him. He was too honest to close his eyes to the difference; eventually the day must come when his self-confidence and Jewish bigotry would be shaken and the suspicion came that possibly, after all, the Nazarenes were living on a higher plane than he, the blameless Pharisee, and that they were right in seeing in Jesus the long-expected Messiah. What if they were right in claiming that He had risen in power and could do what the Law could not, give peace and pardon?

His Preparation. This is what we mean by his preparation for conversion. His old hopes were bankrupt. He sought peace and found it not; incessant struggle was the portion of his days and nights. He longed to be reconciled to God, but knew not how. The failure of what he had relied upon prepared him in measure, at least, to give ear to any new promise that offered to bring him peace with himself and with God. His very discontent and despair made him the more ready.

At Damascus. Suddenly "the wonder" happened. Along the country roadside, a short distance from Damascus, the light of the Syrian sun, at noontide always bright and dazzling, was lost in a great white radiance that shone with blinding brilliance from heaven. All else was forgotten before one great presence that appeared to his entranced vision. This radiant presence explained itself. It was the Christ revealed to him. The cry of his tortured soul had been heard and "the vision splendid" is vouchsafed him. Then, all at once, he wakens to the realization that the longing of his life is fulfilled, the wonderful thing has happened; in Jesus, he has found God; in accepting him, he has found pardon; the fear and terror are gone while his soul is flooded with peace and power; God, in the Crucified, has come to abide with him. Because he has come to know God in Jesus Christ, the man, who only a moment before stood at the bar of the Law condemned to death,

has been freed from the curse of the Law, acquitted before God's throne, born again with the power of an endless life.

Accounts of Conversion. Three accounts are preserved for us of his conversion[11] and a number of references to it occur in the letters.[12] The story comes originally from Paul himself; it was his experience and the fact that in "the castle-stair speech"[13] and in his defense before Agrippa[14] we hear him telling it, justifies us in believing that it was a staple of his missionary preaching. Luke would have abundant opportunity to hear it both on such occasions and as they two talked together upon their many journeys.

The Question How. There is no question as to the fact of his conversion; there is great difference of opinion, however, as to how the fact is to be understood or explained. The fact of his conversion is the essential matter; the other is only a question of method or manner; it is of secondary importance and should not be allowed to assume any greater value; for all that, it is exceedingly interesting and not without real value to other souls who would learn from the man who had so great an experience. A variety of explanations are offered; we shall look at three which are the most representative and practically include the others.

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[11]Acts 9, 22, 26. [13]Acts 22.
[12]1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16. [14]Acts 26.

A Literal Experience. For many readers, the most satisfactory explanation is simply to regard the account as a direct, literal statement of what actually took place. The elements of the story are plain, simple facts; Jesus so appeared to Paul that he was visible to the physical eye; if to Paul, naturally, to others also; the light was a virtual light as blinding for the rest as for Paul; the voice, one audible to all ears. Others, however, are persuaded that we are indebted to Paul for the account and that it is an attempt on his part to make intelligible to others a great inner experience of his own life; in doing so he cannot confine himself to exact terms because religious experiences are hard to describe and defy exact terms. So he feels free to make use of such expressions as will best enable him to suggest or interpret to others the marvelous impression made upon his soul when Christ was "revealed *in* him." He counts on his hearers having some religious imagination or response; religious experiences are religiously discerned. We can find this exemplified in practically any testimony meeting to-day.

When Paul exhorts the Ephesians "to put on the whole armor of God,"[15] or when he says to the Romans that they "are not in the flesh,"[16] are his words to be taken literally? If not, then, why is it more necessary to regard this story as cold, exact, literal statements? In case we do so construe it, one thing is outstanding, no one else saw Jesus or

[15]Eph. 6:10-18. [16]Rom. 8:9.

heard his words or got anything out of the experience except Paul alone. It was his experience and his only save as he communicated it to others.

A Vision. A second theory says that Paul saw Jesus, but that men see in two ways, with the naked eye and with inward vision. It was a real experience and it revealed to him Jesus as the Son of God in an absolutely convincing way; but it was an experience of the inner self, a vision that came through the inner senses rather than an objective manifestation. Paul had other visions and was so thoroughly convinced of their genuineness that he acted upon them in crises and supreme moments of his life, for instance, at Troas[17] and at Corinth.[18] "We should emphasize the fact that Paul reckoned 'being caught up into heaven'[19] as one of his supreme experiences, that he uses the identical expressions about it and treats it with the same entire faith in its objective reality as he uses with regard to the Damascus scene."[a] The experience is not affected; the contention is merely that as a vision it can more readily be understood.

A Long Process. Still others see in the experiences only the culmination of a long process that had been going on in Paul's mind. Dissatisfied with his own experience, aroused by what he saw and heard from the Christians, uncertain as to the rightness of his course of action in hounding the Christians, he had allowed doubt to creep into

[17]Acts 16:9. [18]Acts 18:9.
[19]2 Cor. 12:2. [a]Weinel, "Paul, the Man and His Work."

his mind as to whether they might not be right. The doubt deepened while he pondered the matter. The dying Stephen shattered his old confidence to its very foundations; he was no longer certain. His conscience insisted upon his giving the claims of the new sect a hearing; his doubtings would not down. Finally, on the quiet way toward Damascus amid the mystic stillness of the desert as he threshed the matter out, came the conviction like a flash from the sky that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Through the quiet processes of his own mind, the light had come to him and, with only the travail of inner experience, had he been brought into the kingdom of God.

The Fact of His Conversion. All these explanations agree in emphasizing the fact, the reality, of the conversion; their difference pertains alone to method. It is a shame to allow the question how a man is converted, to throw the fact of his conversion into the shadow. The variety of explanation is proof positive that God was never limited to one way of revealing himself to men. In sober fact, these different theories all agree in the end; the point in every one is that Paul had a great experience which resulted in his becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. In each case, the experience led to and ended in Christ. Was it an objective experience, it convinced him of the gospel's truth and led him to Jesus; was it a vision, it convinced him of the gospel's truth and showed him Jesus as the Christ; was it only a thought-process,

again, it convinced him of the gospel's truth and brought him into fellowship with Jesus as Lord. While we are trying to decide how, let us not forget the essential thing. No matter how—something happened at Damascus!

The New Man. Old things passed away, all became new; in Christ Jesus he was a new creation.[20] He was fond of saying that he had died with Christ;[21] he had died unto the old life, old thoughts, old self, old hopes. So complete was the change in the man, so entirely did he yield himself to the dominion and power of Christ, that he could illustrate it in no better way than by saying he had died unto the things that formerly ruled his life and that he had been born unto a new life. He had died unto sin and the Law, but not as the Law had decreed.[22]

The End of His Quest. Through the gift of God's love he had been acquitted, pardoned; through a faith that dared believe that God is gracious and has provided in Jesus Christ a way of escape, he had been made free. He had neither bought nor paid for his salvation by "deeds of the Law"; he had received and accepted it as a gift from the dear God who loves men enough to redeem them. At last his heart found peace and his spirit rest. The seeker after God at length completed his quest. For so have we learned to look upon Paul; not as a man revelling in sins

[20]2 Cor. 5:17. [22]Gal. 2:19; Rom. 6:11-14.
[21]Rom. 6:8; Gal. 2:20.

and giving loose rein to his lower nature, but as one who was tragically in earnest about his salvation, yet knew not where to find a Saviour.

Significance of His Conversion. Of course, he could not realize at once all that it meant; some things were self-evident; his vision had shown him "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;"[23] in God's reconciled face he had read the heart of the Eternal and learned how He loves. It meant for him a new conception of God, of religion, of worship, of the world, and of life. It was a high day both for Paul himself and for the gospel—that day at Damascus. There Saul, the persecutor, died; there Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, was born; there came the experience that was the main source of his teachings; there he received his "revelation of Jesus Christ;"[24] there he learned the compelling power of Christ which he afterward preached so effectively,[25] and there he first entered into that mystical fellowship with Jesus Christ which made the real secret of his apostolic service and success.[26]

As Preparation for Ministry. We have pointed out how various factors in Paul's experience combined happily to fit and prepare him for his Christian ministry and to contribute toward his power. Nothing contributed so much as did his conversion, his own personal experience

[23]2 Cor. 4:6. [25]2 Cor. 5:14.
[24]Gal. 1:12. [26]Gal. 1:20.

"in Christ." He was well trained and well equipped; it was fortunate that he was a citizen of the world and knew how to approach and work with both Roman, Jew, and Greek; fortunate, too, that he was of religious temperament; but the great factor, and the one that brought all the others to their true power, was the fact that he was a man with a great experience, one of the twice-born. He knew the Lord. We refer to him frequently as a great theologian; he was far greater as the man who kept fellowship with Jesus Christ. While he drew much of his teaching from current sources, the dominant note is the experimental note; his insistence is not upon a set of beliefs or theological opinions but a transfiguring experience; for him "the gospel's apology is lives made new."

His Call. When did he realize that he was to be the apostle of Jesus? We must not forget that he had long since devoted himself to God and regarded himself as the Lord's servant. With his new experience came no change in this intention save to intensify it. The vision that brought him the answer to his own needs brought also the conviction that his life's service belonged to his Redeemer. It is one thing, however, to realize that your life belongs to God and must be devoted to his service; it is quite another to realize along what definite lines, in what particular field, your life is to be invested. The first was an integral part of his conversion experience; the second is not so clear. There are passages from his letters which

seem to imply that with his conversion came the definite conviction that he was to be the apostle to the Gentiles. The Acts seems to infer that he began his work in a general way and that only gradually, under the lead and direction of later experience, did he come to see that his specific work was to be among the Gentiles.[27] As a matter of fact, he never worked exclusively among the Gentiles; all things to all men was the rule of his life.[28] How did the call come? Could it have been suggested by the fact that he was of the Gentile world and was so well adapted to carry the gospel to the nations? Certainly, he was the strategic person to be commissioned for the work. Isn't it reasonable to believe that God calls men to do what they are adapted to or prepared for? Wouldn't the very fact that he was so well equipped, so well calculated to minister to the Gentiles be in itself a call to such work?

It was a tremendous stride forward that anyone should catch the vision that the gospel was for the Gentiles. Paul's experience and training were calculated to make him more susceptible to such a thought than perhaps anyone else. He had not been saved as a Jew; he had been saved as a sinner; if salvation were not dependent upon being a Jew or upon Jewish rites, why was it not for all men? If he could be saved as a sinner, why could not all sinners be saved likewise? Again, it may be his

[27]Acts 13:46; 18:6. [28]1 Cor. 9:19-22.

early years and associations with the Gentiles gave him an interest that he interpreted as a call.

His call was inherent in his conversion; there was for him no other thought than that he must serve his Lord; he could not realize in full from the beginning all that was involved; he stood at command but must await his marching orders. In course of time came the opportunity to preach to the Gentiles and more and more his work was devoted to them. Their territory became his recognized field; as occasion required he championed their cause so vigorously that eventually he came to be known particularly as "the apostle to the Gentiles." However, even to our last report from him,[29] he labored for his own people; he had learned from Christ Jesus that in His gospel the old distinctions were broken down; in Christ Jesus, there "is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all."[30]

[29]Acts 28:17.
[30]Col. 3:11.

III. SUGGESTED READINGS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

Read: Acts 9:1-19; 22:1-16; 26:2-19; Rom. 7:7-25.

Weinel: St. Paul, the Man and His Work. Chap. VII "The Day of Damascus."

Gilbert: The Student's Life of Paul. Chap. V "The Vision of Jesus and the Changed Life."

(1) What is meant by preparation for his conversion?

(2) From what various sources would he know about Jesus?

(3) Why did he "obey the heavenly vision" Acts 26:19?

(4) Should his conversion be made a standard for others?

OUTLINE FOR STUDY OF PAUL'S LIFE AND LABORS.

(1) Before the Damascus Experience.
   a—Youth—Tarsus.
   b—At feet of Gamaliel—Jerusalem.
   c—The persecutor of the Christians.
(2) Conversion and Call.
(3) The unrecorded ministry.
   a—Damascus.
   b—Syria and Cilicia.
   c—The year at Antioch.
(4) First Missionary Campaign—Cyprus and Province of Galatia.
(5) Council at Jerusalem—Gentile freedom won.
(6) Second Campaign, Gospel carried to Europe—Provinces of Macedonia and Achaia.
(7) Third Campaign—Province of Asia—Ephesian Ministry.
(8) The First Imprisonment.
   a—Arrest at Jerusalem.
   b—Two years at Cæsarea.
   c—Two years at Rome.
(9) Possible Release, Second Imprisonment and Martyrdom.

IV. PAUL—THE CAMPAIGNER FOR JESUS CHRIST.

The Campaigns in Syria and Cilicia and Galatia.

Both the letters and Acts intimate that Paul entered at once upon Christian activities and began to bear testimony to Christ. Strange to say, there is a stretch of at least fourteen years from the time of his conversion during which he is almost lost to us. Some few facts are saved from these years but they are almost negligible, compared with the full reports given of the later years when he comes again into fuller light and his work is traced in detail.

Arabia. The blinded Paul was brought into Damascus[1] and, after several days, was baptized by Ananias, a disciple of that city. Just what his course was after that cannot be definitely determined. Our two sources make independent reference and give separate accounts, each introducing casually only what the occasion required; for neither had the purpose to cover the years in detail. Luke's account gives the impression that Paul immediately began preaching in the synagogue at Damascus and continued until he had aroused such hostility from the Jews that his life was in danger. But in Galatians 1:17 Paul states that he "went away into Arabia." Whether this was immediately after his conversion or somewhat later cannot be

[1]Acts 9.

decided. Equally uncertain is his reason for going, where he went, how long he remained, and what he did there. It is a pretty bit of speculation, which has found wide currency, that he retired thither to meditate, to adjust himself and his thinking to his new life, to work out what was involved in the step he had made in becoming a Christian, and to formulate a system of Christian teaching and doctrine. This is very plausible; its only defect is that it lacks evidence. He did build his new body of teachings; he did develop his Christian beliefs some time. We are not sure that it is wiser to believe that he retired thus, worked the matter out, and returned with his finished system to take up his work of preaching than it is to believe that he began work at once and in the course of experience gradually developed his teachings. From what we know of the man in after years, it would be very easy to believe that he went to Arabia because forced to leave Damascus and that in Arabia he was telling the story of the Cross. Neither is it to be overlooked that we know practically nothing of his doctrine or teaching for fifteen or twenty years after his conversion; the earlier addresses ascribed to him in Acts furnish insufficient material for forming any adequate conception of his doctrines and the earliest letters were not written until he had been a Christian at least twenty years. There was ample time in those years for him to develop his position in matters doctrinal. And for such matters the school of experience has no superior.

Damascus. Both Paul[2] and Luke[3] refer to a ministry in Damascus some time during the first three years after his conversion, which was attended with such success as to antagonize the Jews. They plotted with aid of the governor of the city to take him and put him to death. Wouldn't it make a good story to beguile tedious hours on a journey, for Paul to tell how he outwitted his enemies by being lowered over the city wall in a basket?

First Visit to Jerusalem. It was full three years after his conversion before Paul went back to Jerusalem; it was "bearding the lion in his den" to go back then, was it not? He could stay only a short time, fifteen days.[4] His reputation as an inquisitor was still strong and made the Christians doubtful about him. His attempt to preach was without success; his old friends had only contempt and hostility for their renegade fellow religionist. A plot was formed to kill him,[5] so he was hurried from the city down to Cæsarea, whence he sailed to his homeland, Cilicia and Syria.[6] The truth is, he never became acceptable at Jerusalem; never became even comfortably popular with the Christian leaders, though he did attain great influence over them. On this first visit, Barnabas introduced him to the few leaders who were in the city at the time and we may be sure that

[2]Gal. 1:17; 2 Cor. 11:32.
[3]Acts 9.
[4]Gal. 1:18.
[5]Acts 22:18.
[6]Gal. 1:21.

Paul made the most of the opportunity to talk with Peter about Jesus and the years Peter had spent with him.

The Obscure Ministry. Syria and Cilicia.

Now follows a long chapter in his life which is closed to us. Several reasons are given for this silence; first, Paul had no occasion to refer to them; second, Luke either did not know them or did not regard them as vital to the plan he had in mind. They are silent years; not necessarily idle years or unimportant ones. The restless energy and tireless devotion to the cause in after years argue most convincingly that these years also were filled with activities, which are simply unrecorded. What he was doing is possibly hinted at. For instance, Paul intimates[7] that the Churches of Judea heard that he was preaching in Syria and Cilicia and were glad; when he started out from Antioch on his second missionary campaign[8] "he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the Churches." His policy forbade him[9] visiting Churches founded by others, so evidently these were Churches founded by himself; if so, they must have been founded during these obscure years. Again, in 2 Corinthians 11, he records a great list of sufferings endured for the gospel's sake, many of which we cannot locate unless they belong to these unrecorded years, possibly while campaigning in Syria and Cilicia. As to the nature of this work, whether among Gentiles or Jews or both, as in his later min-

[7]Gal. 1:23. [8]Acts 15:41. [9]Rom. 15:20.

istry, how successful it was, what its detail, we are utterly uninformed. Doubtless it bore fruitage; at any rate, these years were for him a great school, disciplining and preparing him for his greater mission campaigns, when he boldly laid siege to the empire as conquest for his Lord. If they did nothing more than get him ready for this larger work, opening his eyes to the gospel's real significance, showing him its true field, developing his Gentile policy and equipping him, as only experience could, with methods of work, they were eminently well invested.

The Year in Antioch. One reason for the marvelous success of the gospel in its first generation was the fact that every layman was a missionary; some of these laymen carried the work far afield as they were driven out of Jerusalem or as they proceeded upon their business. Some of them brought the Good-News to Antioch and made a departure in that they preached not only to Jews, as their custom had been up to this time, but also to Gentiles.[10] The work prospered, a great revival broke out. The Gentiles crowded in. The mother Church at Jerusalem sent down the most available man, Barnabas, who was born not far from Antioch, on the island of Cyprus, to take care of the situation.[11] "He was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit," but evidently the revival was more than his power and experience could cope with; he needed help and the best possible help, no appren-

[10]Acts 11. [11]Acts 11:22-26.

tice. Accordingly, he went to hunt up Paul and, having found him at Tarsus, brought him down to help him at Antioch. Why should he hunt up Paul in such a crisis unless the evangelist in Syria and Cilicia had created considerable stir and won a reputation for himself that had reached to Antioch? Another intimation that the obscure ministry was a significant one! A whole year he remained in Antioch with Barnabas; then the two went up to Jerusalem to carry alms from the Antioch Church for the poor in Judea, who were suffering from famine. This is known as the "famine visit."[12]

"The Campaigner." Shortly after his return from Jerusalem, Paul began what is commonly regarded as his missionary career. From now on, for a period of years, the records concerning him are quite full. This work is usually divided into three "missionary journeys." This term, though so commonly used, is apt to give a wrong impression of these labors, as though he was wandering about in a haphazard manner without any definite plan or purpose, doing incidental preaching from place to place, establishing Churches as he could and returning occasionally to Antioch. This is quite an inadequate conception of his work. Neither must the term be allowed to imply that he is now entering the mission field, when, as a matter of fact, he has these years long been doing mission work in Syria, Cilicia, and we know not where else. We prefer to speak of him as the mission cam-

[12]Acts 11:30.

paigner because he had definite objectives and his labors were carefully planned so as to accomplish the same. This objective was the spread of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire and his missionary enterprises were planned with the keen insight and shrewd generalship of a military leader, who will go out to make new conquests for his king. He will carry the Good-News from province to province, from center to center, and establish the Church of Christ in all its borders. To be sure, we do not think he mapped out his whole campaign from the start; he could not work out its details; things did not always work out to the success of his plans; sickness, opposition, and other obstacles compelled him to alter and adjust his first plans and adopt new ones. Sometimes his way was blocked and he had to enter other fields; again, he was not allowed to remain long enough to establish the work. As we read the story, his movements may in places seem somewhat haphazard, disconnected, and planless. But another look will show the strategic campaigner, following a general plan, often interrupted but tenaciously adhered to in the main, to plant the Cross of Jesus in one part of the empire after another until the whole should be evangelized.

Separated by Holy Spirit. The first campaign started from Antioch, which, from this time on, Paul made his headquarters. Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark, nephew to Barnabas, composed the party. They did not go out as official

representatives of the Church at Antioch. They were not commissioned by the Church nor were they supported by it; in fact, their going out was not due to official action taken on part of the Church at all. It was due to personal initiative. Paul, Barnabas, and three other brethren held a kind of "hay-stack prayer meeting," no doubt to consider plans they had been discussing among themselves and had determined to lay before the Lord. The result of their prayer meeting was the common conviction that it was the Spirit's will that Paul and Barnabas should go out on campaign.[13] How the Holy Spirit spoke unto them is left untold. How does the Holy Spirit speak to men to-day? Isn't he still speaking? Could it be that Paul felt the work in Antioch no longer needed him and that it was time for him to be carrying the gospel into new fields, that he mentioned the matter to Barnabas and the brethren, who submitted the matter with fasting and prayer to God, with the result that the Holy Spirit brought them to the one conclusion that the suggestion was of God and should be followed? Isn't seeing that a thing ought to be done and that you can do it "God's call" to you to do it? The "laying on of hands" was only friendly benediction—a well-known custom of the day, not an ecclesiastical consecration. They went out to their task with the encouragement of a few friends rather than as "official representatives of the home Church."[14]

[13]Acts 13:1-3. [14]Acts 13:1-4.

Cyprus. The little party of three, going out "to take the world for Christ," sailed from the seaport of Seleucia and directed their course toward the island of Cyprus, attracted thither presumably because it was the home place of Barnabas. They landed at Salamis and traversed the island westward to Paphos, preaching in the synagogues. At Paphos, the residence of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, they came into conflict with Bar-Jesus, a learned Jew, resident at court, who became jealous of the influence of the apostles and tried to discredit them with his patron. This aroused Paul's indignation and he spoke sharp words of judgment against him, which were fulfilled in a temporary blindness. The success of the work in Cyprus is not indicated save by the fact that Barnabas and Mark later returned to visit it.[15]

The Changed Name. Much has been made of Luke's change of Paul's name from this time on. Up to this point he has invariably referred to him as Saul; hereafter he just as consistently calls him Paul. One writer suggests that Paul, according to current custom, took Sergius Paulus as his patron and used his name to indicate it. Imagine Paul doing that! Another suggests that the new name was borrowed from the proconsul because he was Paul's first prominent convert; another that Paul now enters Gentile work definitely for the first time and the change of

[15] Acts 13:5-12.

name celebrates his change of policy; still another that Paul took a new name after his conversion, following the custom of Jesus of giving disciples new names.[16] The more probable reason is that, like any Jew who was a Roman citizen, he had a double name: Saul was his Hebrew name; Paul a part of his Roman name.

Antioch in Pisidia. From Cyprus, they sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem, much to Paul's disgust. No halt was made in Perga. They pressed directly on to the city of Antioch in Pisidia, about one hundred miles north; here they found a synagogue and, on the following Sabbath, opened their work with an address that attracted much attention. Luke reports the address made by Paul on this occasion, as he does from a number of other places. From the very nature of the case, it cannot be regarded as a verbatim report. The story requires an address of an hour or two, while the report here can be spoken in three or four minutes. This does not mean that Luke's report is an invention or unreliable. All we care to know is whether it rightly represents Paul's thought and is a reliable sample of his missionary preaching. Why shouldn't it be? He had heard Paul preach often and under many circumstances and was well able to represent him accurately. In so reporting, Luke only resorts to a device quite customary among writers of the

[16]John 1:42.

day, of recording speeches that purport to come from the mouth of their heroes on certain occasions.[17]

Opposition. The work prospered but the success was chiefly among the proselytes and other Gentiles. The character of their preaching and its success both conspired to make the Jews hostile toward the apostles. After some time the Jews organized their opposition and compelled them to flee the city—not, however, before they had established a Church.

Iconium, Lystra, Derbe. In a similar way they labored in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, winning converts and planting Churches, which were predominantly, though not exclusively, Gentile. The hostility of the Jews was not content to expel them from a city, it followed them from one city to another, interfering with the mission and stirring up the Gentiles, where possible, against them. At Lystra, Paul healed a cripple, whereupon the people, familiar through their myths with the idea of gods appearing upon the earth, concluded the apostles were gods and called Barnabas "Jupiter" and Paul "Mercury," "because he was the chief speaker."[18] With great tact, Paul used the occasion to introduce the gospel, telling them they were not gods, but came as the messengers of the one true God who sent the Good-News. Their adoration was short lived, for, very shortly, under influence of Jewish opposition, they stoned the apostle and left

[17] Acts 13:13-52. [18] Acts 14:8-18.

him for dead. Retracing their steps through these four cities, they came down to Perga, preached there and returned directly to Antioch, where they reported their labors, to the great joy of the brethren.[19]

A Three Years' Campaign. In Luke's report the campaign appears a short one; but they must have spent considerable time on it; much work was done that is not reported; for instance, "the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all that region"[20] and "the region round about" Lystra and Derbe.[21] This indicates a much greater work and presupposes a much longer visit in each neighborhood. It would take considerable time to establish Churches which would stand against persecution.[22] So, perhaps, the usual reckoning of three years for this campaign is quite reasonable.

The Churches of Galatia. One of Paul's letters is addressed to "the Churches of Galatia"; it is an interesting question whether by the Churches of Galatia he means the Churches founded on this mission and whether it was to these the letter was addressed, or whether he later visited farther north in the ancient Galatia and founded the Churches to which the letter was sent. It is true, Antioch belonged to Pisidia, and Lystra and Derbe are mentioned as cities of Lycaonia; but these smaller territories along with others had been organized into a Roman province called Galatia

[19]Acts 14:1-28. [20]Acts 13:49. [21]Acts 14:6. [22]Acts 14:22.

after one of the lands included. The reasons are very good for believing that when the term Galatia is used it refers to the Roman province; if so, these Churches would be in Galatia and they could be addressed as "the Churches of Galatia."

The Question of the Law. When he returned to Antioch, he was confronted by a problem that had long been threatening and that was of greatest moment in the history of the Church. It was a question that was not seen and so not reckoned with in the beginning of the Church; it arose out of historical conditions and was the result of the developing life and activity of the gospel. It was the question of Gentile freedom in the gospel and involved the larger one of how a man is saved—the very heart of the gospel itself. Its origin was perfectly natural. At first all Christians were Jews; the first Churches all Palestinian; even when the work was carried abroad, the new converts were, at first, all Jews and, later, included many of them. These Jewish Christians were all under the sway of the Jewish Law; they had been reared to obey its many prescriptions concerning the clean and the unclean, about fasts, ritual, and ceremonials, etc. Their restrictions set them off as a peculiar, exclusive people and made impossible any social or religious intercourse with outsiders. When converted, they did not cease to be Jews; most probably they thought nothing about the matter; if they did, they still felt under obligation to observe the Law as

religiously as before. But it was a different question when the Gentiles were brought in. Now, alongside of and intermingled with this Jewish Church had been growing up another group or body of Christians. For fourteen, possibly seventeen years, Paul had been successfully offering the Good-News to the Gentiles as well as to Jews and, as a result of his efforts, there was a thriving Gentile Church, possibly rivaling the Palestinian, which had never been under the dominion of the Jewish Law and had become Christian without any condition that its members should either become Jews or observe the Mosaic Law. Thus there were really two Churches in the Christian fold.

How It Came Up. As the number of Gentile converts increased and the work among them became better known at Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish influence, dissatisfaction arose over the matter. Certain leaders, who wanted Judaism maintained, began to ask if the Gentiles could really become Christians unless they were circumcised and learned to keep the Jewish Law;[23] in other words, whether a Gentile could become a Christian or be saved without first having become a Jew. Further, difficulties came up in mixed communities over the question how Jewish Christians, who kept the Law, could associate with Gentile Christians who did not observe it, for to the former these latter were ceremonially unclean and according to the Law they could not keep fellowship with

[23] Acts 15:1.

them. So, a strict Jew could not eat with an unclean Gentile. This disposition made even the most significant part of Christian worship, the Lord's Supper, which was a common meal, impracticable.

The Judaizers. The more the Gentile mission prospered, the clearer became the signs of a brewing storm. Certain agitators from the Jerusalem Church appeared in the Gentile communities and began fomenting trouble. They were Christians; called themselves "brethren," but labored diligently sowing seeds of discord and contention. They looked with surprise and open disapproval on what they saw and heard, namely, that those should be received as Christians who had not been circumcised, that the requirements of the Mosaic Law were not being complied with, that the "clean" Jews and "unclean" Gentiles ate together as brethren. Insinuations were dropped that such things were very irregular and would not be countenanced at Jerusalem by the "real apostles." Reflections were likewise made, by such comparisons, upon Paul's apostleship and character, and upon the gospel he was preaching.

Situation at Antioch. The storm broke when Paul returned to Antioch and found the Church there all disturbed through the work of the Jewish emissaries. This was a mixed congregation, though mainly Gentile. The Jewish Christians belonging there had raised no scruple about associating with the Gentile converts and were even eating with them. Paul had taught them that the

law was to be that of brotherly love and had allowed them to determine such questions as brethren in Christ. He did not impose the Law on Gentiles and, on the other hand, had not encouraged the Jews to disregard the Law. But, when the Jerusalem agitators came in to "spy out our liberty" and to teach that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised and followed the Law, Paul saw the real danger and hastened to meet it openly and defiantly. His whole work, the entire Gentile mission, was threatened. The very character and existence of Christianity were at stake.

The Real Question. The real import of the trouble was infinitely more serious than a matter of ceremonial detail or the ritualistic observance of the Law. Much more was involved and the apostle was quick to discern and point out the vital significance. For his keen mind and clear-seeing spirit, the work of the Judaizers spelled in plain words the ruin of Christianity. It meant that men were being taught that something else was necessary to their salvation beside Jesus Christ. His gospel of salvation only through faith in Christ was being shorn of its strength and robbed of its vitality. Jesus was being dethroned as Saviour of the world and his place given over to rites and ceremonies; the life of the spirit, which made men new and transformed them into sons of God, was to be taken away and in its place the keeping of the Law substituted. These "false brethren"[24] were not

[24]Gal. 2:4.

playing fair; they professed to believe in Jesus but, in insisting that one must also keep the Law, they were practically contending that salvation was dependent upon the Law as well as upon Jesus. Paul's gospel taught that there is no salvation save through Jesus Christ; had there been other means of salvation, then had Christ died in vain.[25] In fine, Paul's gospel is at issue; yea, more, the very character of Christianity is on trial. The final question at issue here is—what is the gospel?—or as Paul develops it in the letter to the Galatians, which was called forth by the same question, how is a man justified, how is a man saved? By faith or by works, through grace or through keeping of the Law?

The Question Carried to Jerusalem. Seeing his work thus seriously involved, as well as the fellowship of believers and the unity of the Church at large, Paul determined, at earnest solicitation of the Church at Antioch[26] to go up to Jerusalem to consider the matter with the leaders there. We speak of this meeting as a council but it was not a council in the sense in which the word came later to be used. It was not an officially organized body representing the whole Church; the only ones present were those from the Church in Jerusalem and the few brethren who went up with Paul. Neither is there any proof here that the Church at Jerusalem was regarded by other Churches as the mother Church in any such sense

[25]Gal. 2:21; 3:21. [26]Acts 15:2.

as Rome is head of the Roman Catholic Church. They did not go up to receive a decree from the mother Church; much rather did they go up to help determine what the position and policy of the Church was to be in this matter.[27]

The Conference at Jerusalem. We have two accounts of this convention[28] which were written from different points of view and for different purposes and, hence, supplement rather than parallel each other. By combining the two, we see that evidently the visitors first met a committee of the leaders before whom the question was laid. At first there seemed a decided difference of opinion; the Law-party was inclined to insist upon its position and even went so far as to demand that Titus, a young Gentile convert in Paul's party, be circumcised.[29] Then Paul told the story of his Gentile mission, how he had offered the gospel to the Gentiles, how they had responded to the call and what indubitable results had followed in their spirit-filled lives and in their communities. The logic of fact was irresistible; there was no use debating whether one could be saved through Christ alone without the Law; the thing was done. God had given the answer; they could not gainsay it. Peter spoke of his experience;[30] others were won; so Paul prevailed against the false brethren and won the victory of Gentile freedom from Jewish Law.

[27]Acts 15:1-29. [28]Acts 15; Gal. 2. [29]Gal. 2:3. [30]Acts 10.

"The Articles of Peace." The result of the conference was in reality a compromise. It added nothing essential and made no essential change in the gospel Paul was preaching to the Gentiles.[31] For the sake of peace and to placate Jewish sentiment, four "articles of peace" were recommended for the Churches disturbed by the question.[32] In addition to this, it was agreed that henceforth Peter should go to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles—practically only a recognition of leadership as the lines were already drawn. The right hand of fellowship was extended Paul and Barnabas in recognition of their apostolic standing; with the added exhortation that they remember the poor at Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch.[33] The compromise made clear the first part of the contention, that one does not need to observe the Law in order to be saved. The other phase of the question, on what ground Jewish and Gentile converts could have fellowship, was not so clear; it was a practical question that must continually recur until amicably disposed of.

Significance of Council. The council was not the end of the matter; shortly afterward Paul had to correct Peter openly before the congregation at Antioch because he yielded too much to the persuasion of those who came down from Jerusalem[34] and seemed to play a double part in the matter of his association with Gentile brethren. Unfortunately, the question turned up later in many

[31]Gal. 2:7. [32]Acts 15:29. [33]Gal. 2:9, 10. [34]Gal. 2:12.

places to embitter Paul's life[35] and threaten his work. He was convinced that his position was right and he continued bravely and successfully to maintain it. Suffice to say, history has abundantly confirmed and justified his confidence. He won no greater victory for the new cause than this; no campaign was more strategic or involved greater consequences. Its significance for both the gospel itself and for the later Church was very great. It meant, first of all, the freedom of the Gentile Christians from the bondage of Jewish ritual and law; it meant the establishment of the great religious truth that a man is saved through faith not by works; that sinners are offered salvation and brought to God through Christ alone, not through doing so many religious acts; that Christianity was secured to the world as a religion of the spirit and of ethical rather than legalistic character; otherwise it might have become a religion of rites, ceremonies, and of the letter. It meant, also, that Christianity was not to be a Jewish sect but a world-religion, and again, that Paul's position was secured as head of the Gentile mission and that the gospel as he saw it, world wide and world saving, was to prevail.

[35]Galatians and Corinthians.

IV. SUGGESTED READINGS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

Read: Acts 13, 14, 15; Gal. 2:1-16.

Ramsay: St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen. Chap. VII "The Apostolic Council."

(1) Trace on a map the route of first campaign.

(2) Why did he go to the synagogues?

(3) How is he "Apostle to the Gentiles"?

(4) Why did he go up to the council?

(5) Show how the question of the council was inevitable.

V. PAUL—THE CAMPAIGNER FOR JESUS CHRIST.

The Campaigns in Macedonia, Achaia and Asia.

Second Campaign. Shortly after their return to Antioch Paul suggested that they revisit the Churches they had founded. Barnabas insisted upon taking Mark along. Paul was not agreed to this because Mark had left them on the previous trip; so they parted company, Barnabas and Mark going to Cyprus. Paul took Silas and proceeded northward by land, visiting the Churches of Syria and Cilicia and, then, those founded on the first campaign.[1] At Derbe, Timothy joined them, a man afterward more closely and affectionately associated with Paul than any other man—"Timothy, my own true son"—he calls him.[2]

Excluded from Asia. In the plan of expansion, the territory next to be entered by Christianity would naturally be the great Roman province of Asia, with its capital in the splendid world-center, Ephesus. The party attempted to go into Asia but was detained, in some way not specified to us, by the Spirit not only from campaigning in Asia but also in the neighboring territory of Mysia and Bithynia.[3] It would be helpful to know how they were "forbidden of the Holy Spirit."[4] To judge from other expressions[5] it would be quite

[1]Acts 15:36-16:4.
[2]1 Tim. 1:11.
[3]Acts 16:6-10.
[4]Acts 16:6, 7.
[5]Acts 16:10.

Pauline to believe that in some way the entrance to these provinces was blocked so that they could not evangelize them and that Paul, in his confidence that the Spirit was leading, concluded that this hindrance was the Spirit's way of "forbidding" them. May not the Spirit "lead" into one field by closing another? The leading of the Spirit never meant blind following.

Macedonia. So they came at length to Troas where Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia calling "come over and help us." Asia was closed. Europe was open; so they "concluded"[6] the Spirit was leading thither. The suggestion has been made that at Troas the party came in touch with Luke, who was himself a Macedonian and the man of the vision—an interesting fancy. This, however, is certain; the records in Acts here change for the first time to the first person, which is most easily accounted for by assuming that the "we-portions," which occur here and in other places later in the book of Acts, belong to Luke; they are portions of a travel diary which he kept when he was with Paul.[7]

Philippi. The first stop was at Philippi; here was no synagogue but they found a little company of worshipers who had a meeting place outside the city beside the river. To them Paul offered the Good-News. The principal convert was Lydia, a prominent business woman, who opened her home both to the apostles and also to the

[6]Acts 16:10. [7]Acts 16:8-12.

Church which was formed there. The work prospered and flourished. Its character was such that there grew up between it and Paul the closest relationship indicated with any Church. In fact, the friendship and understanding were intimate enough to persuade Paul to do with them what he did with no other Church, to set aside his rule of self-support and accept aid from them.[8] When a prisoner in Rome, they sent Epaphroditus with money for his support, in reply to which he sent them a letter which has been facetiously referred to as "Paul's love letter."

The Mob. The length of the stay is not recorded but so much work implies considerable time. It was rudely forced to an end.[9] Here he came into conflict for the first time through the Gentiles. The trouble came through a young girl, a python, which is the Greek term used to describe a person with the power of ventriloquism. This power was superstitiously referred to possession by some spirit. Evidently the girl so regarded herself. Her masters exploited her gift as fortune telling and made much money. She came under the influence of the evangelists, who healed her and thereby incurred the enmity of her masters, who found their profitable business destroyed. Enraged over their loss, they gathered a crowd that proceeded to mob the apostles as trouble-makers and violators of Roman law in teaching unlawful customs. They were hurried to the magistrate, where, without

[8]Phil. 4:15, 16; 2 Cor. 11:8, 9. [9]Acts 16:16-40.

trial, they were beaten and then thrown into prison.[10]

In Prison. During the night an earthquake occurred which gave the prisoners a chance to escape. The frightened jailer, knowing his life was forfeit if his prisoners escaped, was detained from killing himself only with the assurance that all the prisoners were still there. Later he cared for Paul and Silas and, under their instruction, was converted and baptized. In the early morning, prætors, apprehensive lest the action of the mob might be aired at Rome and lead to inquiry, ordered Paul and Silas to be released and to leave the city. Now, Paul took opportunity to declare his Roman citizenship and claim his rights as he could not do to the mob. This was a shock to the prætors who now saw themselves in danger of being called upon to explain to Rome why they had permitted mob-violence, why a trial had not been given, and why a Roman citizen had been beaten. They hastened in person to the prison, released the prisoners, and humbly begged them to leave the city, which they did after bidding farewell to their friends in the home of Lydia.[11]

Thessalonica. Passing by Amphipolis and Appolonia, possibly because there was no synagogue there, Paul hastened to Thessalonica[12] and began work in the synagogue which was most encouraging; Luke's mention of three Sabbaths[13]

[10]Acts 16:11-24. [12]Acts 17:1-9.
[11]Acts 16:25-40. [13]Acts 17:2.

does not limit the stay here. For three Sabbaths they were allowed to use the synagogue; then they were compelled to secure other headquarters. The Jews here stirred up trouble. They charged the apostles with sedition and with treason in teaching that there was another king beside Cæsar, even Jesus. They assaulted the home of Jason, Paul's host, and, failing to find the apostles, dragged Jason before the magistrate and compelled him to give security. That night friends hurried the apostles away to avoid further trouble. It was not Paul's wish to leave but he did so with the promise to return very soon; when he could not do so it distressed him exceedingly as we can see in his letter,[14] which he wrote not long afterward to explain his failure to return, to answer attacks made on his character and work and to correct some troubles in the congregation.

Berea. At Berea, whither they turned next, they had notable success, particularly among the Jews, who searched the Scriptures diligently to see "whether these things were so." The stay here, however, was cut short by the Jews who came down from Thessalonica and aroused such feeling against them that the brethren hurried Paul away and brought him down to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy at Berea.[15]

Athens. It does not seem to have been part of Paul's plan to open a mission in Athens, but while he waited for his helpers he saw things

[14]1 Thess. 2:17-3:8. [15]Acts 17:10-15.

that stirred his soul and prompted him to tell the Good-News both in the synagogue and also in the market-place. His words attracted attention and he was brought before the Areopagus, where he made an address that reveals his tact in using an occasion as well as his skill as a preacher. There is a difference of opinion as to what is meant by the Areopagus; some call it a hill, Mars Hill; others call it a city council, before which he was brought on trial; others see in it a kind of university council whose business it was to examine wandering philosophers and determine whether they should be allowed to speak in the city. A few converts were won but no general enthusiasm was awakened.[16]

Achaia. Athens was in the province of Achaia, as was also their next point, Corinth. In Athens, Silas and Timothy joined Paul and were sent back to Thessalonica to look after the work there and carry special messages, but particularly to tell why Paul himself did not return. They rejoined him at Corinth bringing such reports as to lead Paul to write then the letter which we call 1 Thessalonians.

Corinth. He came to Corinth depressed by his experience in Macedonia and his failure to return to Thessalonica. A vision came to uplift and cheer him with the assurance that in Corinth the Lord had many people. The city was itself notorious for its wickedness; its very name was a

[16]Acts 17:16-34.

proverb for licentiousness, luxury, and vice. Nowhere had he yet had opportunity to test the gospel's power so fully. But some such transfiguring power as the gospel was the city's only hope. He gave himself zealously to his task, working for a while in the synagogue, then removing to the house of a converted proselyte near by. The leader of the synagogue was converted; some other Jews were claimed, though the dominant character of the Church was Gentile. The success of the work enraged the unbelieving Jews who attempted to secure judgment against Paul on grave charges before the new proconsul, Gallio, but to Gallio, the whole matter appeared only a petty Jewish quarrel and he dismissed the charges most unceremoniously.[17]

Priscilla and Aquila. Shortly after coming to Corinth, Paul found two friends, Priscilla and Aquila, who were to play a great part in his later life and work. They were business people of his own trade, tent-makers, and were, apparently, in position to furnish him work, and to help him greatly by allowing him to arrange his work so as best to command his time for preaching; for here as elsewhere he earned his own living.[18]

Eighteen Months in Corinth. The campaign in Corinth was the longest up to this time in any one city, lasting a year and a half. The Church which resulted from it was one of Paul's strongest Churches; we have the names of a

[17] Acts 18:1-17. [18] 1 Cor. 9:6; 2 Cor. 11:7.

goodly number of the members and two letters addressed to this Church give us a closer insight into his work and also into the character of those first Christian Churches than any other documents we possess.

Asia. Leaving Corinth, he went over to Ephesus for a short visit; then, with the promise to return very soon, he hastened to Jerusalem (to keep the feast). After which, he went down to Antioch to see his old friends and, from there, again revisited his Churches and came to Ephesus.

We have seen the apostle in his campaigns enter successfully the provinces of Syria and Cilicia, Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia. He had been compelled to pass by Asia. Now it is opened to him and he proceeds to open in Ephesus one of his most notable and the longest of all his recorded missions. Here he remained three years[19] building up a congregation in the city and extending the work throughout all Asia.[20] Unfortunately, the records covering this busy ministry are very meager, although enough suggestions are given to enable us to see the real proportions and significance of the campaign.

Apollos. Priscilla and Aquila removed from Corinth to Ephesus and found Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, eloquent and well trained in the Scriptures, teaching in the synagogue. He had heard of the work and baptism of John, possibly somewhat of Jesus and his teaching, but was not

[19]Acts 20:31. [20]Acts 19:16.

fully instructed concerning the gospel. Aquila and Priscilla took him, "expounded unto him the way of the Lord perfectly," i. e., explained the gospel as they had heard Paul interpret it, and sent him to Corinth to carry on the work there. Very similar to this was the experience Paul himself had with twelve disciples of John the Baptist, whom he led into the gospel's full light and the truth of the living Christ.

Ephesus. Paul was allowed to labor without interruption an unusually long time in Ephesus. For three months he was permitted to use the synagogue and gained a ready hearing from the Jews. Then, for more than two years, he held daily services in the school of Tyramus, a large public hall rented for the purpose. His long stay is good evidence of the success of his work and that he found this territory fruitful soil for the gospel. It was not all pleasant. These days knew their dangers and perils. At one time he was in gravest peril, from which he was rescued by Priscilla and Aquila, who "laid down their own necks" for him.[21] He tells the Corinthians he had "fought with beasts at Ephesus,"[22] which may be only a statement for the cruel treatment received at the hands of hostile men in Ephesus, or it may be a literal statement; for, though no Roman citizen could legally be thrown to the beasts, we know that Roman citizenship was sometimes violated.[23] Again, he writes that he was sentenced to death.[24]

[21]Rom. 16:4. [22]1 Cor. 15:32. [23]Acts 16:37. [24]2 Cor. 1:8-10.

There is no word as to the reason for or nature of the danger; we are simply dependent upon the little rifts of light which occur incidentally in our sources.

His Success. Another story emphasizes both the extent of Paul's influence in the city and the danger to which he was exposed. Luke relates that one triumph of his preaching was the overthrow of magic. The city was known for its devotion to the goddess Diana, whose temple was the wonder of the whole province, and for its practices of the magic-arts. The manufacture of shrines, objects, and books of magic formed one of the city's chief industries. Gospel light dispelled this superstition and played havoc with this business. On one occasion, the people brought their books of magic, valued, Luke says, at fifty thousand pieces of silver, and burned them publicly. The falling off in the sale of images of Diana led Demetrius, the head of the silversmiths' guild, to work up a mob to protest against the spread of the new teaching. He was clever enough, however, to cloak his business motive under religious guise, and to win the sympathy of the people by appealing to their devotion to the goddess. He insisted that her honor and position were threatened. This is the first instance where an attack upon the gospel was inspired by organized business interests. The mob rushed to the theater and spent its energy in shouting for Diana. Paul's friends detained him from going into the theater and the city officials dispersed the crowd

with grave warnings as to what would follow if news of the day's disorder should get to Rome.[25]

Troubles at Corinth. A new source of worry was added to his Ephesian ministry by trouble that arose in the Church at Corinth. A serious division arose in the Church over leaders; some held to Paul's leadership and authority; others preferred the eloquent Apollos; still others were of close Jewish sympathy. Partisanship ran high. Apollos left and came over to Ephesus. The spirit of factionalism absorbed all attention and gave tolerance to great lack of discipline, abuse of Church customs and indulgence in conduct utterly at variance with gospel living. The Judaizers came in to breed trouble. Their line of attack was a "campaign of slander" against Paul's character and apostleship; they sought to undermine his authority and his teachings both by personal attack and by showing him no true apostle, but very inferior to "those very-eminent apostles" at Jerusalem.[26] Paul saw that the attack involved not only his authority but the overthrow of the gospel he had preached. For him, tradition, doctrines, recognition at Jerusalem were secondary matters compared with "the demonstration of the Spirit" in lives renewed and spirit-filled. So the matter gave him great concern. Several letters were exchanged; several of the congregation went over to consult with him; it is probable that he made a hurried visit to Corinth.[27] Titus was sent to deal with the situation. Paul

[25]Acts 19:8-41. [26]2 Cor. 10:1-3. [27]2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1.

left Ephesus shortly after the riot, planning to meet him at Troas on his return from Corinth.[28] That the situation was grave, we can see from Paul's statement that when he failed to meet him there, he could not rest nor could he remain, even though a great door of opportunity opened to him. He hurried into Macedonia, met him there, and received his favorable report of conditions in Corinth to his great relief. In reply, he wrote our 2 Corinthians, the most personal document from Paul's pen in our possession. This he forwarded by Titus and two other brethren[29] who were to look after certain affairs before Paul's coming. He tarried a while with the Churches in Macedonia, then went on to Corinth to spend the winter.[30]

The Collection. At the council at Jerusalem, the elders had exhorted Paul not to forget the poor.[31] Jesus must have spoken a Jerusalem proverb when he said, "The poor ye have always with you."[32] Ever since the exile, the poor there had been a special object of attention for the Jews of the Dispersion. All Jews, even proselytes, sent the general tax to the temple; in addition to this, special gifts were often sent for benefit of the poor. Perhaps this suggested the idea to Paul of making such a gift from the Gentile Churches to the poor Christians there. For two years or more the plan was under way;[33] it was gathered from four of the provinces in which he had established

[28] 2 Cor. 2:12, 13. [30] Acts 20:3. [32] John 12:8.
[29] 2 Cor. 8:18, 22. [31] Gal. 2:10. [33] 2 Cor. 9:2.

Churches, Galatia,[34] Asia,[35] Macedonia,[36] Achaia.[37] Workers had been sent to oversee it and to take charge of it. Personally he did not touch it, very wisely throwing responsibility for it upon representatives chosen by the Churches. It was to be ready to forward the following spring. At his suggestion the Churches named their own delegates to go up with it.[38] Had it been an insignificant affair, "a penny collection," they would not have been justified in sending a committee of seven to deliver it.

His New Plan. The first thought of the collection was, naturally, a brotherly care for the poor; it had other, perhaps greater, significance for Paul. For one thing, it was a practical demonstration of the character of his Gentile converts and what ideals were being instilled in them; again, it showed very tangibly in what regard they were taught to hold the mother Church. He hoped thereby to cement the bond of friendship and unity between them, to destroy all possible hostility, allay all suspicion and perfect the sense of fellowship, while breaking down all distinctions of race or class in the Church. We think it had further meaning in that it marked a new point or line of departure in his policy. He felt his work in the East was now finished; he would close it in some such marked way and then turn westward, visiting Rome

[34] 1 Cor. 16:1.
[35] Acts 20:4.
[36] Acts 20:4; 2 Cor. 8:10.
[37] 2 Cor. 9:2.
[38] Acts 20:4.

on his way to Spain.[39] In view of this plan he wrote his letter to the Romans to prepare for his visit.

Last Visit to Jerusalem. As the feast of the Passover approached, he made ready for his trip to Jerusalem. He planned, at first, to cross into Syria by sea, but learned of a plot of the Jews to waylay him, so changed his plan, went up through Macedonia and met those bearing the collection at Troas, where they tarried a week. At a late service, one night, a young man named Eutychus fell asleep, dropped from a window and was picked up by his friends as dead. When Paul came down he embraced him and assured his friends that life was still in him. Thence, they hastened on to Jerusalem, stopping at a number of places; at Miletus he met the elders from Ephesus and bade them a touching farewell.[40] At Tyre and Cæsarea he was warned not to go up to Jerusalem, as trouble from the Jews awaited him there. With characteristic boldness he replied that he was "ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."[41]

The False Report. In the briefest possible statement, Luke says the elders kindly received Paul and his friends and glorified God at their report; thus it would seem that only the scantiest recognition was given the notable gift of the Gentile Church, from which Paul had hoped so

[39]Rom. 15:24. [40]Acts 20:4-21:17. [41]Acts 21:13.

much.[42] Manifestly, the interest of the elders was centered on another point and from it they were not to be diverted. The old feeling of the Jews toward the Gentile mission had not exhausted itself. If anything, the lines were more closely drawn and the leaders, James and Paul, more clearly recognized. The point of emphasis, true, had shifted. The question was no longer whether Gentile Christians must keep the Law. Reports were coming up that Paul was teaching that the Jews themselves should no longer keep the Law. Such a thing had never entered Paul's head but the report sufficed to arouse great intensity of feeling among Jewish believers and unbelievers and to endanger both his life and work.[43]

Plan of the Leaders. To deal with the situation, the elders immediately acquainted Paul with the reports and made a proposition by which they thought to checkmate the evil influence of the report and to secure Paul's person and life. They asked that he do something to show beyond question that, in so far from teaching Jews not to keep the Law, he was himself still a "faithful Jew in regard to the Law." This was quite consistent with his position; he was still a Jew and observed the Law. He was uncompromising on one point. The Law could not save. He observed the feasts and other regulations of the Law[44] and, no doubt, found them a true means of grace (just as John Wesley

[42]Acts 21:17-20.
[43]Acts 21:17-22.
[44]Acts 18:18; 20:6; 1 Cor. 9:20.

used the ritual of the established Church after he had been compelled, for all practical purposes, to withdraw from it). Their plan was that he join four men who were just completing a Nazarene-vow, shave his head and pay the expense involved in fees, offerings, etc. Thus would the enemy be robbed of their clubs.[45]

Riot in Temple. The plan was followed out, but with disastrous results. As he was in the temple fulfilling the vow, certain Jews raised the cry that he was defiling the temple. They had seen him in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile convert from Ephesus and, when they saw him in the temple with the four penitents, evidently concluded Trophimus was one of them. Forthwith they gave out the cry that he was defiling the temple by taking Gentiles into it. Now, this was a serious charge: for both Jewish and Roman law provided that taking a Gentile into the inner courts of the temple was a crime punishable by death. This penalty would speedily have been inflicted had not the Roman guard, quartered in the neighboring tower, Antonia, come to the rescue. The mob had already drawn him from the inner court, closed the door, and was fanatically demanding his death, when the captain, Claudius Lysias, appeared to quiet the mob and inquire its cause. The crowd all talked at once and the captain could get no intelligent answer.[46]

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[45]Acts 21:23-26. [46]Acts 21:27-36.

Castle-Stair Speech. As he was being led into the castle, Paul, well schooled in facing dangers, coolly asked permission to address the mob. In one of his letters we read that his enemies said he was weak in person, rude in speech,[47] and without polish; such charges lose all credence when we read of his speech here from the castle-stair. The crowd may have been attracted at first by his speaking in Aramaic dialect, but that does not account for all his power over the mob. There was something masterly and imperious about the man and something so compelling about his story as to win a hearing even under such circumstances. The address was simply his life story, telling how Christ had saved and used him. The mob heard quietly until he told how Jesus had sent him to open the Kingdom to the Gentiles. Then the tumult broke out afresh. The captain, not understanding Aramaic, was still ignorant of the charge against Paul, so he took him into the castle and was about to scourge him in hope of making him confess his guilt. Paul, however, was spared this "third degree" experience and indignity by declaring his Roman citizenship. This seemed to arouse a certain sense of fellowship in the captain, also a Roman, who made it his business from this on to see that Paul had fair play.[48]

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[47] 2 Cor. 10:10; 11:6. [48] Acts 21:37-22:30.

Before Sanhedrin. The next day the captain made another attempt to learn the charges by bringing him before the Sanhedrin. This is a dramatically significant picture. It is more than a poor preacher arraigned before a large, dignified body of ecclesiastical officials. Christianity stands at the bar of Judaism; its best known representative awaits judgment from the highest court of the Jews. The hour is prophetic. His case was prejudged. Paul saw, and, with a skill more able than commendable, proceeded to divide the enemies' camp, so that the meeting broke up in a virtual riot. He did this by pitting the Pharisees, who believed in the resurrection, against the Sadducees, who denied the same, with his statement that he was being persecuted because he shared the Pharisaic faith in the resurrection and preached it, referring to the great prominence he gave to the resurrection of Jesus in his teaching. Then the Pharisees of the Sanhedrin championed his cause; it secured him no safety, gave him no help. He was taken thence only to be remanded to prison.[49]

A Prisoner. He was thrown into prison and spent the next five years as a prisoner, a few days here, two years and three months at Cæsarea, and more than two years at Rome. To a man of his ambitions, untiring energy, and with his expectation that the time was short until the Lord's return,[50] these years of enforced quiet could not have been other than most trying. All his plans

[49]Acts 23:1-11. [50]1 Cor. 7:26, 29; 1 Thess. 4:15.

for extension were held up. He improved every opportunity that offered itself to win fellow prisoners and jailers, to administer the Churches and preach in the barracks; but this was poor solace for a soul aching to be in motion. Jewish hatred against the renegade, as they considered Paul, was to be appeased only with vengeance; more than forty pledged themselves neither to eat nor drink[51] until they had silenced him forever. They planned to ask that he be sent again to the council and, on the way, they would waylay and kill him. The plot was revealed by Paul's nephew and so defeated. The captain decided to hurry him, under heavy guard, to Cæsarea to Felix, the procurator.

Before Felix at Cæsarea. In course of five days Paul was called before Felix[52] for trial on charges preferred by his enemies from Jerusalem, led by Ananias, the high priest. One Tertullus acted as prosecuting attorney. They charged him with being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, a pestilent fellow, a leader of sedition, and with having profaned the temple. He conducted his own defense, admitted the first charge and claimed it was no legal offense. The others he simply denied, saying his accusers had offered no proof and that the charges were not sustained at Jerusalem. Felix delayed judgment, wishing to avoid further conflict with the troublesome Jews and hoping also to obtain money from Paul. He allowed Paul great liberty in prison and made him occasional visits, which

[51] Acts 23:12-21. [52] Acts 24:1-26.

Paul used in the effort to convert him. So the case hung fire for two years until Felix was relieved in office by Porcius Festus.

As a matter of policy, the newly appointed Festus made a visit at once to Jerusalem, the capital and most important city of his province. The high priest took advantage of a new official's natural anxiety to make a favorable impression to ask that Paul be returned to Jerusalem for trial. On the way, he was to be slain. Festus diplomatically replied that he would be in official residence at Cæsarea and they should come down and try the prisoner before him.

Appeal to Cæsar. So, in a few days, he again faced his accusers from Jerusalem; charges and rebuttal were practically same as before; nothing definite was established. Festus proposed that Paul be transferred to Jerusalem. Paul knew that such a move spelled ready ruin for him. He rejected the suggestion, and, acting upon his right as a Roman citizen, appealed to Cæsar. This took his case from the local courts and carried it to Rome for imperial decision. His reason for doing this is not hard to find. He had already waited more than two years without result. Jewish hostility was not harder to endure than the indifference of his judges. He knew full well that he could no more hope for mercy or fairness from one than from the other; at Rome, removed from local prejudice and intrigue, he might hope for a fairer hearing; at Rome, too, possibly his case would more

readily be disposed of and he would the sooner get to his work again, for he was evidently confident of acquittal at Rome. Ramsay makes the interesting suggestion that he appealed to Rome because he wished to make a test case of his own to determine the legal standing of Christianity in the empire. He was being detained as a Christian. Was it a crime to be a Christian; was Christianity not to have the same recognition as other religions in the empire? He would precipitate the inquiry by carrying his own case directly to Cæsar. Let Cæsar speak; then would Christians know just where they stood before Roman courts. It may be that this was in Paul's thoughts. If so, it did not work out as he hoped. We are persuaded that he was much more influenced by his desire to have a decision and get out in the field again.[53]

The Charge. Festus now found himself in the embarrassing position of having to send a prisoner to Rome without knowing exactly what the charge against him was. King Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to pay their respects to the new procurator and Festus told of his difficulty and asked advice. The king at once desired to hear Paul. The apostle used the occasion as might be expected, not to plead for his life or liberty, but to tell the company the story of the Cross, appealing to his own experience and making a great impression upon his hearers, who saw no reason for his being detained a prisoner.[54]

[53]Acts 25:1-12. [54]Acts 25:13-26:32.

Journey to Rome. At length Paul started for Rome. It was not as he planned to go; still he goes as a witness for the gospel. Luke and Aristarchus accompany him. Luke gives a very full, first-hand account of the trip which turned out to be very long.[55] They took ship at Cæsarea, made a short stop at Sidon, then changed boats at Myra, taking passage on a ship carrying grain from Egypt to Italy. The weather immediately became rough. Paul advised wintering at Fair Havens, an island of Crete, but the captain thought it wiser to push on to a better port. They were caught in a great storm that lasted fourteen days, and, finally shipwrecked, without loss of one of the two hundred and seventy-six souls aboard, on the island of Malta. In this critical situation, Paul stands out in bold relief; he practically took command; the captain heeded his advice; the crew took courage at his word;[56] the sailors were prevented from cowardly deserting,[57] and the lives of all the prisoners saved at his suggestion.[58]

In Rome. They spent the rest of the winter on this island; then, in early spring, took shipping on another Alexandrian boat which had wintered there and proceeded toward Rome. They landed at Puteoli, where disciples met them, with whom Paul was allowed to remain a week. The rest of the journey to Rome, one hundred and thirty miles, was made on foot. A group of dis-

[55]Acts 27:1-44. [57]Acts 27:30-32.
[56]Acts 27:33-36. [58]Acts 27:42, 43.

ciples from Rome met them at the Market of Appius, forty miles out, and another at The Three Taverns, thirty miles out. So Paul came to Rome.[59]

The Two Years in Prison. The next two years he remained a prisoner. His imprisonment was not severe; he was allowed to live in "his own hired house," attended, of course, by a soldier-guard. Immediately upon arriving, he called for the Jews of the city, to whom he explained his case. They said they had heard much of the sect but had not received any news to prejudice them either against Paul or his case. He endeavored to convince them of the truth of the gospel, but, it would seem, without much success. He kept open house, receiving all who came and putting into these imprisoned years all the energy he could, so that even through his bonds Christ might be preached and the gospel published.[60]

Here the record closes. Just when his trial came and what its outcome was are not told us. The unbroken tradition of the Church has been that, in the end, he yielded up his life, a martyr for Christ—being beheaded about sixty-four. Certain of his letters, written during his imprisonment, indicate that he was very confident of acquittal.[61]

A Second Imprisonment. There is a very general belief that he was acquitted at his first trial, at the end of the two years mentioned in Acts 28:30, and did more campaigning

[59] Acts 28:1-16.
[60] Phil. 1:12-18; Acts 28:17-31.
[61] Philem. 22; Phil. 1:25; 2:24.

both in the East and West. This finds confirmation in several of the early Church fathers. The three pastoral letters, 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy, are also strong witnesses for such a release. They cannot be located before the first Roman imprisonment and, if accepted as Paul's, demand some such situation as acquittal after the first trial, further mission work to which they belong, arrest, a second imprisonment and death. The details are lost to us but the man himself is the Church's great heritage and the gospel's great witness through all the centuries.

V. SUGGESTED READINGS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

Read: Acts 16:1-20; 17; 21:23-25, 27, 28.

(1) Trace on map route of second campaign.

(2) Name charges on which opposition to Paul was based at different times. Acts 16:20, 21; 17:7, 8, etc.

(3) Ought he to have acted on suggestion of leaders? Acts 21:23, 24.

(4) How were his prison expenses paid?

(5) Were Paul and his sister on friendly terms? Acts 23:16.

(6) Why does book of Acts end as it does?

VI. PAUL—THE CHURCH WORKER AND PASTOR.

A Study in How He Got Things Done.

The Man of Affairs. The preacher is not always the man of affairs. The revivalist has won for himself no great reputation as a builder and organizer of Churches. In Paul is found this combination of qualities to a striking degree. His work is traced both by successful evangelistic campaigns and also by flourishing, well-organized Churches, which he left as a result of his labors. Our study furnishes us the chance to come close to the enthusiastic preacher, the passion of whose life was to "preach the Cross;" it also gives the chance to observe at closer range the organizer and builder of Churches. The enthusiast in this case does not overshadow the practical worker. His enthusiasm and devotion were finely balanced by his sane intelligence and rare good sense. The evangelist is untiring in winning converts; the level-headed pastor is equally tireless in caring for the converts, organizing them into Churches and developing for them a Christian community. He was a preacher who, in the fullest sense of the term, brought things to pass—got things done. We propose now to study him from this point of view, to inquire into his methods of work, the plans he used and how he succeeded in getting his results.

A Christian Statesman. He came to his work a trained man; this training, together with his native ability, enabled him to bring to his task the power to deal with situations, insight into affairs, outlook upon the world and a skill and diplomacy in handling men that rank him high as a statesman. As a Roman citizen, he saw, as no Palestinian Jew like Peter or John could have seen, the opportunity offered by the Roman Empire for the spread of the gospel. He thought and planned in terms of the Roman Empire as he planned his campaigns for Christian conquest. We have seen him entering Syria and Cilicia, then the province of Galatia; his next step in expansion would naturally have been Asia and thither he turned on his next campaign, to find it closed to him; so he crossed over in Europe and evangelized the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia; then, later he returned to plant the Church in Asia; with the gospel introduced in these Eastern provinces, he planned to visit Rome and then open a campaign in the West. He was a builder of empire. Such things are not wrought by chance or caprice; nor in any such way did Paul undertake them. He had a program—the evangelization of the world in his generation! As already suggested, his work was greatly affected by local conditions and suffered many changes and adaptations but it was not done at random or by chance. It was carefully planned and was worked out according to a definite system. He moved on a well-directed line of movement, from

East to West, until the banner of Christ had been raised in every province.

Some Campaign Principles. Certain considerations entered in to affect his plans and methods of work which deserve attention. (1) He shared the belief of the early Church that Jesus was soon to return; his advice to the Corinthians, for instance, was very much influenced by this conviction;[1] he encouraged the Thessalonicans to believe that some of them would live to have part in it.[2] He must haste; there was much to be done, so he labored with feverish intensity and unyielding zeal. (2) He was convinced that the whole world was lost in sin, both Gentile and Jew,[3] and that there was but one hope of escape and that through Jesus, the Crucified; hence, must he haste his mission. (3) The motto of his ministry was "All things to all men."[4] He was a Jew to the Jews that he might win the Jews; but it was part of his definite policy, part of his agreement with the leaders at Jerusalem that he should not enter Jewish territory.[5] The Jews with whom he labored were those of the Dispersion; he, himself, said he was unknown by face to the Churches in Judea.[6] (4) Further, he made it a point of honor not to enter territory already opened by other workers.[7] This was not due to any unwillingness to cooperate with others but was the outgrowth of

[1] 1 Cor. 7:29. [4] 1 Cor. 9:19. [6] Gal. 1:22.
[2] 1 Thess. 4:13-18. [5] Gal. 2:9. [7] Rom. 15:20; 2 Cor. 10:15.
[3] Rom. 1, 2.

experience and adopted as a practical measure of expediency. Had it been as honorably observed by others as by Paul, it would have saved him many a heartache and many a problem.[8] This is why he makes it so clear to the Romans, whom he will visit, that he is simply coming as a visitor on his way to Spain;[9] he has no jurisdiction over them.

Entered Great Centers First. A great proof of his administrative ability is to be seen in the fact that he made the great centers of the provinces, the cities of strategical prominence and location, the first spheres of his work. The very mention of these cities traces the expansion of his labors, Damascus, Tarsus, Antioch in Syria, Antioch in Pisidia, Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, all places found on even the smallest map of that day. In these centers he began his missions; these great cosmopolitan cities were the special field of his own personal missionary activities. He was a city-bred man; knew the city and its life and found there the place where he could be most effective. One of the most essential things in the life of any worker is for him to find his field, the work to which he is peculiarly or best adapted; then, let him give himself to it. Paul was ready, as the occasion offered, to preach anywhere, no matter how large or small the place; he is preëminently, however, the city evangelist.

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[8] 2 Cor. 11:4, 14; Gal. 1:9. [9] Rom. 1:11, 12; 15:24.

His Financial Policy. His arrangements for beginning his work in any city were of the simplest. His financial policy was peculiarly simple. He had no "at-home supporters," no "home-board" to rely upon for funds. He had his trade, tent-making, and, by working at it, supported himself while carrying on his campaigns.[10] He recognized the principle of ministerial support and contended his right to it. In 1 Corinthians 9:4-14, he lines up six very good, up-to-date arguments for pastoral support. He refused to exercise the right. It was a concession on his part even to accept a gift from the Churches. From one only, that of Philippi, did he accept aid[11] and that he accepted more out of consideration of their love for him than because he wished it. There was reason for his financial policy. He wished to keep the gospel, and himself as well, free from all association with the common, traveling philosophers and teachers who were, as a rule, mere hirelings and interested only in what they could get. In this way, he disarmed all enemies who might accuse him of mercenary motives. Again, it was a further way for him to express his devotion to Christ and the gospel; preach he must, he could not help himself; but he did not have to preach "without cost"; by so doing, he could the better show his real motive and demonstrate how dear the gospel was to him.[12] Thus would he surely manifest his love for Christ.

[10] 1 Thess. 1:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; 2 Cor. 11:9.
[11] 2 Cor. 11:9; Phil. 4:15, 16.
[12] 1 Cor. 9:15-18.

Opening a Campaign. On arriving in a city, it would be necessary first to find a stopping-place and then work. This might not be possible at once, or, at all, in the places where he remained only a short time. In Corinth he met Aquila and Priscilla, who very probably helped him greatly by providing him work and, possibly, also by allowing him to adapt his work hours to his preaching. They went with him to Ephesus, it is assumed, for the same purpose.[13] The next thing was to find a point of contact from which to commence operations. This was readily found in the synagogue, where he found Jew and Proselyte, who gave him a more or less attentive hearing and from whom he won some converts. About the synagogue gathered Gentiles, who furnished good soil for the new seed and helped him secure a larger hearing. His success at the synagogue varied; in some instances he was allowed to continue for some time without interruption and succeeded in winning a goodly number of Jews to the new faith, as in Ephesus.[14] The rule, however, was for him to be tolerated in the synagogue only a Sabbath or two, as at Antioch in Pisidia[15] and Thessalonica;[16] the prejudice of the Jews could not give him place longer. But not alone in the synagogue did he tell the story of the Cross; in the market-place, as in Athens, on the streets, in private houses, where he could, would he plead the cause. After the syna-

[13] Acts 18:18; 1 Cor. 16:19.
[14] Acts 19:8.
[15] Acts 13:44, 45.
[16] Acts 17:2.

gogue was closed to him his work was carried on in various places, the house of Jason,[17] the home of Justus,[18] in the school of Tyrannus,[19] where he could accommodate his hearers and where they would be free from interruption from the Jews.

Organized His Converts. One of the great secrets of his success lay in the fact that his work was thorough; "he was no touch-and-go missionary"; he insisted upon his converts having a real personal Christian experience. Then he demonstrated his pastoral genius by looking after, following up, and taking care of his converts. He was bent on doing permanent work, on getting lasting results, on securing converts who would abide in the Lord. As a means toward this end, he gathered them together and organized them into a little Christian community, a Church. These separate souls, who had come into a new life, were not left to drift along, they were welded into a brotherhood and given a sense or consciousness of power that made for growth and development and made them instruments of the gospel's further expansion. Not much is told in regard to the manner of organization, what officers were named, or what their duties; we are clearly shown that the essential spirit in the movement was not the question of authority but of fellowship. The officer was first of all an elder brother. The ruling and guiding power was the presence of the Spirit. Paul used the idea of the Church to deepen the life of the

[17]Acts 17:5. [18]Acts 18:7. [19]Acts 19:9.

members and also as a means of discipline and improvement. For him the whole body of believers was one in the unity of the Spirit,[20] the dwelling place of Christ,[21] the temple of God,[22] and, as such, must be kept free from all defilement and everything impure. It was like one great family in which brotherly love prevailed and in which all the display of ecclesiastical authority and distinction, that became so characteristic of the later Church, was entirely lacking. Only a few officers are named and they more as overseers, helpers, care-takers than as officials; they were selected not to be elevated above the others but because of their ability to serve.

Revisited Churches. He very prudently and wisely made a practice of returning to his Churches as repeatedly as occasion allowed, "confirming and strengthening them."[23] On the first campaign he purposely retraced his steps that he might again be with his newly-made converts; the second campaign was begun by revisiting these Churches. Before he returns to Ephesus to open his mission there, he once again returned to them. Likewise, he took advantage of occasion to revisit the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia repeatedly. Through such means he was enabled to keep informed as to the progress of affairs in the various communities and to render them aid. His care for them never ceased; they were as a burden on

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[20]Eph. 4:3-7.
[21]Eph. 2:22.
[22]1 Cor. 3:16.
[23]Acts 14:22; 15:36, 41; 18:23.

his heart and mind and their every concern was of moment to him. We must marvel at the breadth of his activity and at the detail of his ministry. How many-sided he was!

Kept in Touch with Churches. The rule of his experience was to have his campaign interfered with and to be himself compelled to leave a place in the course of a few weeks. Corinth and Ephesus are the two exceptions to the rule. This did not end his interest in the Church from which he was thus separated. Permanent institutions were not possible with such limited work. Neither Churches nor character are properly built in a day. He did not merely come, preach a little while, and then go. His interest was not so transient or passing. Driven out, he kept in touch with his mission by messengers, through visiting brethren, by letters, and by whatever other means he could. He administered the affairs of the Churches at a distance, as a campaigner often must. When news came of a situation that was serious or needed his care and guidance, if he could not go in person, he sent a personal representative like Timothy to Thessalonica from Athens,[24] and Titus to Corinth.[25] Or, if this was not practicable, he wrote a letter and dispatched it to the congregation as in the case of the Galatians. The Churches appealed to him, submitting their difficulties, seeking his counsel and instruction, and looking to him for leadership. It was really marvelous how he kept in touch with the

[24] 1 Thess. 3:2. [25] 2 Cor. 7:6, 7.

whole field, guarding the Churches so carefully, counseling them so sanely and wisely, and saving them from so many dangers. His finger was never long off the pulse of their life. With a constancy and devotion hard to rival, he nurtured his little communities and, by advice, rebuke, instruction and inspiration, sought to perfect them against the coming of their Lord.

Put Converts to Work. His genius as Church organizer is further seen in the way he put his converts to work. In nothing is his leadership or his statesmanship so apparent as in his ability to handle people and to multiply himself through his helpers. He was himself a great worker; but not one of the short-sighted workers who try to do it all themselves. Very often it is easier to do ten men's work than it is to put ten men to work; here many a leader fails. The Pauline Churches were working Churches; every member was expected to use his gifts. The gifts might vary but every member had some gift;[26] all were regarded as coming from one source, the Spirit, and none were to be despised; just as every member of the human body is necessary before the body can properly perform its functions, so the Church needs the gifts of all, no matter how they may differ; and the gifts are given of the Spirit, not for personal exaltation, but that the whole Church may profit therefrom.[27]

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[26] 1 Cor. 12:7. [27] 1 Cor. 12:4-31.

His Helpers. There is no more pleasing feature of the apostle's work than the reference to his helpers. He liked company and sought fellowship. On starting out on campaign, he took a Barnabas, a Mark, a Silas, a Timothy, or others with him. Very soon he had gathered about him quite a company of assistants, associated with him in his campaigns and trained by this association with him. He knew how to handle men like a general, how to appeal to them, to enlist their interest and enthusiasm, and how to put them to work. They shared his work and were employed by him in even the most delicate situations. He depended upon men to respond to the heroic and unselfish. The secret of calling out the best in men by believing in them, by trusting them with difficult things to do, and by treating them considerately, gave him many a valuable aid and faithful friend. Tertius and others wrote his letters for him.[28] Silas and Timothy, as well as others, carried his letters and revisited the Churches as his personal representatives when he could not return. Titus went in his place to Corinth at a time when relations with this Church were dangerously strained and, with skill and diplomacy, restored order in the Church there after it had been stirred up and divided by agitators. The collection was looked after entirely by the several representatives. Aquila and Priscilla were left in Ephesus to get ready for the mission there while he went down to Jerusalem. A wise leader

[28]Rom. 16:22.

indeed is it who knows thus how to give away and share his work and responsibility! He will get much done.

No wonder he made friends and gained helpers. He knew how to appreciate men and tie them to himself with bands of steel. In how many ways he showed his appreciation. He speaks of them courteously as his brethren, all unconscious of his own authority. They are his "fellow workers"[29] he plants; Apollos waters; or they are together "fellow soldiers of Jesus Christ" or "true yokefellows"; again, they are all slaves with one common Master, Christ. The spirit of comradeship, of dependence as well as of helpfulness, of common loving service and of brotherly concern is constantly manifested toward them. They were as dear to him as children to a nurse[30] or as sons to a father.[31] He knew the power of praise and did not fail to use it, judiciously, to be sure. By sharing confidence with them was his hold on men also strengthened. To one woman, whose hospitality he had shared, he courteously applied the title "patroness"[32] and to another, whose home had been open to him, he lovingly referred as "mother."[33] Men never fail to respond loyally to this kind of treatment. How much they endured for him and how much they endured with him, all devoted to one Lord! One secret of their friendship was their love of a common master. Their love and faithfulness to the

[29]1 Cor. 4:5-9. [31]1 Cor. 4:15. [33]Rom. 16:13.
[30]1 Thess. 2:7. [32]Rom. 16:2.

apostle was an expression also of their devotion to the apostle's Lord. This lovable side of his nature must not be forgotten in counting his greatness; such human touches bring him very near.

Extended Work from the Centers. Another great field in which he employed his helpers and which would have been impossible without them, was the extension of his work from the city-centers into the territory round about. This was a part of his settled policy and bears the mark of the keen-eyed statesman and organizer. From Thessalonica "sounded the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia but also in Achaia;"[34] the work at Corinth expanded throughout the neighboring country;[35] from Antioch in Pisidia "the world spread abroad throughout all the region;"[36] Ephesus became a center from which the gospel was spread so actively that almost all Asia, in a short time, was in danger of falling away from the ancient worship of Diana.[37] In writing to Corinth, Paul sends greeting from "the Churches of Asia."[38] This extension of the mission beyond the city-center was accomplished in various ways. He himself did some of it but it was a physical impossibility for him to do it all; we believe he found his best field in the city. Visitors to the city may have been converted in his service and carried the gospel back home with them; Philemon of Colosse may

[34] 1 Thess. 1:8.
[35] 1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Cor. 10:10.
[36] Acts 13:49.
[37] Acts 19:26.
[38] 1 Cor. 16:19.

well be such an instance;[39] he had been converted under Paul and later returned home to found a Church in his own house in Colosse. The great body of this extension work, however, was done through his helpers, his converts, whom he sent out into the work; he was on the lookout for promising material;[40] he appealed to them for service, gave them training and sent them a-field to tell the Good-News.

The Pastor. We have been looking at our apostle as evangelist, Church organizer, gospel statesman, and have noted some of the more prominent traits that marked him as such and that contributed to the permanent results of his labors. There is another side of the campaigner and his work which is equally attractive and instructive. He was a great pastor. The spirit of the pastor speaks through his every letter. In addition to all the hardship that came to him from without, was added constantly this also, "the care of all the Churches."[41] He was an effective preacher; his words and personality both claimed attention; oratory and rhetoric, however, "the excellence of speech or the cunning of logic" were not his best ammunition. Their value was certainly not overlooked, but they alone had not been able to find the way to God as he told the Corinthians. His message was purposely couched in such simple phrase that his enemies spoke slightingly of it as "the foolish-

[39]Col. 2:1; Philem. 19.
[40]Acts 16:1.
[41]2 Cor. 11:28.

ness of preaching."[42] It was his determined purpose to speak plainly, so that all could understand; his dependence was upon the demonstration of the presence and the power of the Spirit.[43] Not a new set of doctrines but a new way of living was his offer in Christ Jesus. The test he looked for was the evidence of the Spirit in new lives. So, the preaching of the Cross, though so simple, was the divinest wisdom, far superior to the boasted "wisdom" of the world, because it did what all else had failed to do, that is, it led them to God and secured to them His help in their daily lives.

Most Converts from Lower Class.

He preached to all classes; the Good-News was for everyone because everyone needed it; all had sinned. Every soul was dear to him; he won men because he loved them. Most of his converts were from the lower classes, the freedmen and slaves, "not many wise, mighty, or noble."[44] Some of the upper classes were won; several had homes large enough to serve as meeting places for the Churches; Gaius and Erastus were certainly not poor,[45] nor was Lydia,[46] Aquila and Priscilla,[47] Philemon of Colosse,[48] and others. Mention is made several times of "honorable women," evidently women of means. Several in official position are referred to; for the most part, however, it was from the lower, poorer classes that the larger number of converts came.

[42]1 Cor. 1:18. [43]1 Cor. 1:26. [44]Acts 16:14, 15. [45]Philem. 2.
[46]1 Cor. 2:3-5. [47]Rom. 16:23. [48]Rom. 16:5.

A Personal Worker. Good as his preaching was, he did not rely upon it alone for results; not all could be so won, nor even reached. Ephesus was no exception in the use of personal methods. He was an incessant personal worker; he did house-to-house canvassing, entered into hand-to-hand endeavor to win men. In prison, he told the story of the Saviour to all who would visit him; he preached in the barracks; fellow prisoners and guards were alike sought for Christ. He could forget his bruised back while he offered a Saviour to the Philippian jailer. When fellow countrymen visited him in prison he endeavored to interest them in the gospel. A poor, runaway slave, Onesimus, engages his attention and sympathy until he, too, is won for the new way.[49] The disciples of John the Baptist, who had only a glimpse of the real truth in Christ, are personally instructed and led into the spirit-filled life. And when he stood before judges, instead of pleading for his life, he virtually attempted to turn the hearing into a revival service and persuade his judges to become Christians. Winning men for Christ was his soul's very passion. The hope of his Lord's early return accounts in part for his unceasing efforts to save all he could. A larger, truer motive is found in his love of men which he had learned from Christ. Love had given the Christ to die for men, love also prompted the carrying of the story of the Cross to all mankind. And, in turn, upon his converts were laid the duty

[49] Philem. 10.

and responsibility of winning others for whom Christ had died.

Tact and Skill. To his love for men, Paul added another trait of greatest value to the pastor; he was a man of great tact and skill. His power in preaching was controlled by a level-headed appreciation of the timeliness of the occasion. His enthusiasm was struck through and through with good sense; pearls are not to be cast before swine. The speech at Athens illustrates beautifully how his tact turned awkward situations to good account; so, too, his reply to Agrippa[50] where a sneer was turned into a fine exhortation. His replies to his enemies furnish many happy examples of this same tact. The time came when his very love of the Churches made discipline necessary; his "velvet scabbard held a sword of steel." When rebuke and chastisement were necessary, he did not flinch or dodge; neither were they indulged in for their own sake. Here, if anywhere, is tact needed. A little misstep may cost how much! If the occasion called for plainness of speech or decision of action, he was equally bold and unsparing. With ruthless logic, he exposed the weakness of false teachers and with unsparing plainness did he bring into the light those who would exploit the Churches in their own behalf. In denunciation of immorality, abuse of the service, lack of proper spirit, he was relentless; even in defense of his own character and apostleship his words were sharp and

[50] Acts 26:29.

bold beyond measure. They were never prompted by a spirit of egotism or self-seeking on his part; time and again he says that such things "break his heart" and that he could not do them were they not absolutely necessary for the good of the Churches and the saving of the faith. Easier were it for him to ignore the assaults but for his converts' good he may not spare the offender. The part of the disciplinarian is a thankless one and the weakling will escape it if he can; Paul did not belong to that class. He had been too true to his converts in winning them to Christ to lose them through lack of needful discipline; the discipline proved his love no less than his preaching and his suffering in their behalf. Without it, the other might have been in vain. Drastic measures were demanded against the offender in 1 Corinthians 5; he was to be "delivered over to Satan," that is, he was to be excluded from the Church; two good reasons were immediately added to justify the measure; first, that the contagion of his example might not spread and, second, that he himself might be reformed and saved.

Devotion to His Work. We have the advantage of distance in looking at his work, and, so, we can see more clearly than could he how great was his success. It was not so evident to him. There was the darker side to the story. Many a time failure stared him directly in the face. Sometimes the newly-won Christians were not strong enough to maintain their new faith and dropped back into the old life. Enemies opposed both his

teaching and authority and tempted his congregations to lower the level of life and faith. Factions, scandals, revolt, and apostasy occurred to entice even the elect. Yet, despite all, he kept right on. His converts were in his "heart to die together or live together."[51] In the eleventh chapter of 2 Corinthians, he details a list of physical sufferings endured as the price of preaching Jesus. He counted not his life dear if only by all means he might tell the Good-News and care for the Churches. The campaigner's hardship and sufferings were of the most heroic type and prove in language not to be misunderstood his devotion to his Captain and His cause. Paul's religion was not "the religion of a cause" but of a person. He had taken orders from his Captain's own hands and those hands were marked with blood. For no abstraction was he offering himself up thus freely day by day; he had seen the Master's face and heard His voice; all was for the Christ he loved. Thus in him were the sufferings of the Christ being filled up.[52]

VI. SUGGESTED READINGS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

Read: Acts 20:17-35; Phil. 2:19-30; 1 Thess. 2:17-3:7.

Hall: Historical Setting of the Early Gospel. Chap. VII, "The Church in the House."

Deissmann: St. Paul: Chap. VIII, "St. Paul the Apostle."

(1) Would you consider Paul a diplomat?

(2) To what motives did he appeal in putting his converts to work?

(3) Discuss his financial policy.

(4) Name his strongest points as a church worker and pastor.

[51] 2 Cor. 7:3. [52] Col. 1:24.

VII. PAUL—THE LETTER-WRITER.

How We Come to Have His Letters and How to Read Them.

Place of His Letters. We know Paul best through his letters. "Every letter of St. Paul is, as it were, a picture of St. Paul; in several letters we have a rapid succession of instantaneous pictures of the man unconsciously left us by himself, the words bearing the impress not only of his soul but even of the frowns and smiles on his face."[a] Thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are credited to him in the tradition of the Church. No other writings from that age are so well known and no others have had so great a place in fashioning and determining Christian thought and ideals. In the religious world to-day, men are still scanning these precious pages for the wondrous truth and light with which they are illuminated.

His Letters Religious Documents. The first thing we should learn about them is that they are great, personal, religious documents rather than a set of abstract, theological treatises. They contain theology and every theological writer of note since his day has tried to claim for his own system the authority of Paul. They are very much more truly described as reli-

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*a*Deissmann "St. Paul."

gious documents because they were written from the religious rather than the theological point of view, out of religious rather than theological interest and because they contain so much material that cannot properly be catalogued as theological.

Grew Out of Special Situation. Again, it should be noted that these letters are not general abstractions, but that each one of them grew out of a special situation. Each was called forth by some particular occasion, dealt with a specified problem or problems, had a definite aim or purpose, and was written with the hope of accomplishing definite results. The Philippians sent him a gift and he wrote to thank them for it. The Colossians had been beguiled with stories of a more perfect salvation from other sources than Jesus; he wrote to insist that they were complete in Christ and that there was no higher salvation. The Thessalonians became fanatical over the matter of the Second-coming and he wrote to sober them. He will make a visit to Rome and sends a letter to prepare for his coming. The Corinthians send a letter inquiring about various matters; he wrote to answer their questions. As a rule, each letter serves more purposes than one, deals with a number of problems.

A Form of Pastoral Activity. Here we meet the pastor who knows how to use his pen, not the theologian; the letters are another form of pastoral activity. As he kept in touch with the Churches and learned their prob-

lems, perplexities, dangers, etc., a letter was oftentimes his only way of sending them help. They are full of pastoral admonition, inspiration, and correction. Here, too, we see the campaigner, directing, by written order, operations upon a field from which he is forced to be absent. Their contents did not just happen to be what they are; they contain what they do because that was the word of instruction or command that was needed on that particular occasion.

Practical. Their point of view and purpose is invariably practical. They were meant to apply to actual conditions and to get things done. The theologian has the privilege of indulging in abstractions and speculations and is under no strict obligation to adapt his writings to any particular situation; it is to be expected that his writings will be technical and abstract. Now, Paul is not theologian or literary worker, he is practical pastor and missionary. His letters are not proof against abstractions; there are places hard to understand, but these were not introduced as abstractions that could as well be discussed at one time as at another; they have place in the letters because they were part of the difficulty involved; they were practical in that they were factors in actual problems and had vital significance for some community whose peace or health was threatened. For instance, Paul did not introduce the discussion of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 in order to fill space or because he was ready to write a thesis

on that subject; on the contrary, the subject was giving trouble in Corinth; wrong ideas were abroad and false teachings were in the air that endangered the Church's life and character, and he wrote to correct and guard against the same. So, while they contain much theological material, they are not to be regarded primarily as theological work. They were not written from that point of view nor with that intent, neither do they bear that character. They carry the ear-marks of the pastor and apostle who wrote for the purpose of securing practical, religious ends.

Their Permanent Value. Their permanent value was not determined by the occasion that called them forth. He wrote better than he knew. The Church recognized the real value of the letters and has prized them as her chiefest treasures the ages through. And this was due to their own merit and character, to what they were. They won their place for themselves and maintain it to-day because of their eternal truth. In many instances, they deal with questions that were only local and temporary. But principles were involved and were developed which are good for all times. No one to-day needs bother about meats offered to idols, nor whether a woman should be veiled in public service. But the principles he offered in settlement of those questions, namely, that brother-love is the law of Christian conduct and that personal consideration should be subordinated to the good of the Church, are still greatly

needed. The applications change from his age to ours but the principles remain the same; they are God's eternal truth. So, in matters of conduct, character, and faith, his message has not lost one whit of its power or truth; his words are still leading men into the Spirit-filled life. Far as we have come on the way of truth, the apostle is still ahead of us in his revelations from God. His ideals have not yet been realized. Each letter gives him its own occasion to set forth in one form or another the great truths of the gospel. They embody the finest expressions of truth and bring into bold, clear relief those inspired instructions and revelations which the community and the individual need in order to have part in the Kingdom of God.

Letters not Epistles. Paul's writings are letters, not epistles, in the literary sense of the word. A distinction is to be made between the two. An epistle is a literary production and must conform to literary ideals and forms; a letter is a written communication between two parties and may or may not conform to literary standards. An epistle is intended for publication and bids for place as "one of the six best-sellers"; a letter avoids publicity and regards it as a point of honor that it should not be read except by one addressed or with his consent. The epistle is more formal and may not indulge the familiarity of subject, freedom of statement, and personal reference quite proper in a letter. An epistle may be addressed as a literary device to a particular set of readers;

a letter, by its very nature belongs to such a circle. An epistle is impersonal, general, and intelligent to all readers; a letter, on the other hand, has a particular setting and is not readily intelligible to other readers until they find the key to it in the situation to which it belongs. In the light of this distinction, Paul's writings take on an entirely different character and demand very different treatment and interpretation. They are letters in the most vital sense of the word; they were not written as literary products; they contain many passages of the rarest literary value and excellence, but they were not written for sake of literary effect or beauty, or for the sake of bringing out a book or a fine essay. They are not pamphlets or brochures; they are letters. As letters they cease to be formal, theological treatises, written in the quiet times and places of his ministry, and become living documents, bits of actual life jotted down on paper, written out of the heat and stress of his daily life. They had to take the place of the writer in living presence, speak for him, represent him, and do what he would have tried to do had he been on the spot. Upon them, more than anything else, are we dependent for hints as to his instructions to the Churches, the gospel he taught, the life he wished to create and the ideals he held before his people. From them, too, comes our clearest light upon his relation to his Churches, the demands they made upon him and how he dealt with them. It is first-hand information.

Revelation of the Man. The man himself speaks to us directly through his letters. It is a great living personality here revealed rather than a beautiful picture in some cathedral window or a marble statue on its age-tinted pedestal. Who reads these pages only to find in them so many doctrines, so much history, or so much literature, has not seen their full meaning or learned their real character. They are so many pages of actual experience. The cloister or the closet never produced such pages. There is neither moth nor dust about them. The breath of life is upon them. The apostle's soul is bared before us, we may almost count his heart-beats. Now he speaks in playful wise as unto children; now he blazes forth into biting sarcasm or cutting irony. Again, he coaxes with pleading words and tearful eyes, or is bold and defiant in his own defense and in pointing out the treachery of false teachers. He settles doubtful problems, disciplines, chastens, consoles, comforts; he speaks of his own experiences, plans, and purposes. He is hurt, distressed, angry. Troubles compass him on every side; his faith never falters. "Prophetic fervor lends wings to his words" while he tells of the deep things of the spirit and makes our promised sonship to God a present reality. The apostle of faith strengthens and inspires as he speaks out of his own great faith, his conviction of the final triumph of his Lord. In exultant mood the seer cries out, "The sufferings of this present

time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."[1]

Ancient Letters. When his letters were finished and ready to send off they did not look much like the letters handed to a modern postman. They were written either on parchment or papyrus-sheet. The latter was the more common writing material of the day. It was made from the leaves of the papyrus-plant, which grew most abundantly in Egypt. Its leaves were split very thin, cut into desired lengths, and then joined, glued, pounded, and polished until a compact, smooth, clear surface was secured, well adapted for writing; it was exceedingly durable; great quantities of it have been found, beautifully preserved, dating from Paul's day and earlier. In place of a pen a stilus was used. If written on parchment, the letter was often rolled, though sometimes folded, then sealed and the address placed on the outside surface.

Letters Dictated. Paul did not do his own writing; his letters were dictated. Tertius was his scribe at one time,[2] other friends at other times.[3] He closed them with his own peculiar greeting and his signature. Why he should have employed an amanuensis is only a matter of guess; some think his eyes were bad; others that his hands were so roughened from his daily toil at the loom that they were awkward with the pen; others that he was not

[1]Rom. 8:18. [2]2 Thess. 3:17; 1 Cor. 16:21.
[3]Rom. 16:22.

over-familiar with Greek script; others, again, that he did so much speaking that he was more ready as a speaker than as a writer, could think better on his feet and so could better express himself by dictating while he paced back and forth in his room or prison.

Significance of Dictation. This habit of dictating lends great help in explaining peculiarities of the letters; it is quite characteristic of them to change very suddenly both in tone, spirit, and subject-matter. These sudden, even violent, transitions or breaks give great difficulty in interpretation; much of this difficulty would disappear if we were to make due allowance for their dictation. Most of his letters could not have been written at one sitting; perhaps hours, or even days, intervened between the dictation of successive parts, in which case this change could readily be accounted for; Romans 9 and Romans 12 furnish good instances. It would be interesting to try to determine the points at which the dictation ceased for a certain day! Thus, too, might other features be explained, like his vehemence of entreaty and directness of appeal as though he were speaking directly to those addressed,[4] and also his habit of interviewing those with whom he is in controversy as though they were before him and he could question them and make reply.[5] Whole sections give the impression of coming directly from

[4]Gal. 3:1; 4:19; 1 Thess. 2:9.
[5]Rom. 2:23; 11:1, 13; 2 Cor. 11:22.

a speaker, on his feet, pleading or arguing his case.[6] With the fervor of a speaker he begins a sentence and forgets to finish it, or turns suddenly from one line of thought or argument to another without careful connection. Again, he throws in parenthetical digressions,[7] which would be much more easily understood in a speaker than in an essayist. There is a disregard of literary accuracy and polish, easily compensated for by a speaker's expression of eye and voice, gesture and attitude, but not so easily overlooked in the written page.

Form of Letters. Paul followed, in the main, the general form of an ancient letter, though he did not hold strictly to any rule. Practically every letter falls into three parts, the introduction, including salutation and usually some mention of personal matters; second, the body of the letter, differently made up according to subject in hand; third, the closing salutation and farewell—"the salutation of me Paul by my own hand." In most of them the introduction is long enough to create a receptive attitude on the part of his readers and builds a careful approach to what he wants to say, as for instance in his letter to Philemon where he commends Philemon for his generosity before preferring the request he wishes to make, or in 1 Thessalonians where he praises the Thessalonians for their faithfulness to the gospel, under persecution, before he begins to defend his own character and conduct. But on the other hand, in Gala-

[6]Rom. 9, 10, 11. [7]Rom. 5:13-17.

tians, he jumps at once into the matter to be considered. The body of the letter falls variously into few or many parts according to the situation; in Ephesians and Colossians it falls into two almost equal parts, the first a section treating doctrinal difficulties; the second, of practical exhortations. In Galatians it divides naturally into three sections; the first, historical and personal, the second, doctrinal, and the third, practical. In 1 Corinthians again it falls into a number of studies which are illuminated all the way through with practical suggestions and exhortations. So they vary; one thing can always be relied upon; the religious welfare of the readers is never lost sight of; every subject, no matter of what nature, is made to contribute to the spiritual upbuilding of the readers. The soul-winner, the builder of character, speaks through every one; each one shows him from some different angle, in some new light, but it is ever the same great-hearted pastor, clear-visioned prophet, and able strategist who reveals himself.

To be Studied as Letters. As letters were they written, as letters are they to be studied. Their recognition as letters points out at once how they should be treated and suggests what method should be followed in reading them. In order to approach them sympathetically and intelligently, certain inquiries are necessary. The attempt should be made to reconstruct the occasion which called them forth and the situation to which they belonged. Their original setting will throw

new light on their every page and make many a dark place clear. A closer acquaintance with the Church addressed and the problem or problems confronting it will lend still further aid. All available information regarding the age and its life will be useful in building the background on which these letters are to be understood. They should be read aloud as well as silently. Their truth will not be exhausted in many readings. Then, too, they must be approached in a sympathetic spirit. Only the receptive reader will reach their heart; they are religious documents and must be religiously discerned. To the heart that is not sensitive to the things of the Spirit, many of their richest words will remain dark sayings.

How to Read the Letters. The following questions or considerations are suggested in connection with or preparatory to the study of a letter: (1) To whom did Paul write the letter, to what individual or what Church? (2) What relations had he had with the party addressed? (3) How did he come to write this letter, what occasion gave rise to it, out of what situation did it come? (4) What did he hope to accomplish by it, what its aim or purpose? (5) How did he handle the situation or deal with the problem involved? (6) Aside from its historical interest, what are its great religious teachings, what its permanent contribution to Christian thought and revealed truth; in other words, what is its value for religious or spiritual life to-day? Now let us look at one or

two of the letters in the light of what has been said. We turn first to Philemon and then for a somewhat longer study to 1 Corinthians.

Philemon. Philemon is the shortest of the letters and the one about whose character as a real letter there can be least doubt. It is addressed to Philemon, evidently of Colosse, a little city not far from Ephesus. He was probably converted while on a visit to Ephesus during Paul's ministry there, and had gone back home to found a Church in his own home.[8] One of his slaves, Onesimus by name, had run away, after helping himself to his master's goods.[9] In some way, the slave had come into contact with the apostle in prison and had been converted.[10] Paul persuaded the runaway that it was his Christian duty to return to his master—no slight thing in face of the fact that his life was forfeit for what he had done—and wrote this letter asking the master that forgiveness and kindly reception be granted the returned one—now a brother in the Lord—and that he be allowed to return and minister unto Paul.[11] With charming tact he refers to what Philemon owes him,[12] appeals to his love of Christ and assures him of the confidence he has in his brotherly love. There is an air of liveliness, good humor, and straightforwardness about it that is irresistible; "Christian feeling is combined with Greek delicacy and the tact of a man of the world"; but not for one line does it descend to the com-

[8]Verses 1, 19. [9]Verse 18. [10]Verse 10. [11]Verses 11-14. [12]Verse 19.

monplace or trifling. In no sense of the word is it "a study" of the attitude of the early Church toward slavery. Yet it does, in the most naive way, throw light on that very subject. Here is shown the spirit of early Christianity that wrote the doom of slavery; "in Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free"; all are brethren; if so, then they must be treated as brethren; all that was needed was a little time to bring the truth home. According to this, Paul and his Churches took the gospel seriously; it was more than doctrine for them; it was the way of life, a new way of living. Sincerity puts heavy tests on faith. Two men are here asked to prove their faith by their deeds; the slave to prove the reality of his conversion by returning to the master he had wronged and making restitution; the master to show the character of his religion by exercising compassion toward a slave whose life he could legally take. Under such searching test it is not hard to discover whether love to God and love to the brethren is a fiction or reality. In this simple little document is shown the type of experience and character the campaigner expected in those who enlisted with him for Christ.

1 Corinthians. The letter to the Church at Corinth, which Paul had founded on his second campaign, furnishes a very good opportunity to see how he kept in touch with the Churches and how he exercised a guiding hand in their affairs. Here also we have our best chance to get acquainted with the life of an early Church and its problems.

It was written during his campaign at Ephesus. Before this he had received a letter from Corinth and sent an answer to the same, both of which are lost to us.[13] Since then further word had come of trouble in the congregation. Communication between the two cities was easy and travelers could easily keep him informed concerning affairs in Corinth. Apollos became involved in the trouble at Corinth and went over to join Paul. Three friends,[14] members of the congregation, some time afterward arrived bearing a letter in which they submitted certain problems and difficulties and sought his help and instructions. Evidently the work in Ephesus would not allow him to go over and look after the situation personally. Apollos felt it unwise for him to return under the circumstances.[15] Paul would counsel with him and the three brethren and go over the situation most carefully with them. In the hope of healing the divisions, restoring order, correcting abuses, controlling enthusiasm that threatened to become fanaticism, of giving needed instruction, and of establishing more fully the rule of the Spirit in the life of the Church, he dictated our 1 Corinthians and dispatched it probably by the three brethren.

The Factions. The letter is devoted, in the first six chapters, to a treatment of conditions in the Church which had, most likely, been reported to him from several sources; the remainder is taken up with replies to a series of inquiries

[13] 1 Cor. 5:9. [14] 1 Cor. 16:17. [15] 1 Cor. 16:12.

and discussions of problems which the Corinthians had submitted in the letter they had sent him by the brethren.[16] In the first four chapters, he attempted to heal the divisions in the Church. A spirit of partisanship had crept in and the congregation had been divided into several camps principally over the questions of leaders, Paul, Apollos, Cephas. These had been compared in a spirit of rivalry and censoriousness that had misrepresented both the gospel and the leaders. Paul very calmly laid his finger on this sore spot and administered heroic treatment. Such party-spirit, said he, was to be branded as false to the leaders, making them rivals, whereas they were fellow workers; it was untrue to Christ, taking his place and giving it to his servants. It misrepresented the gospel as a kind of philosophy while in truth it was a divine revelation, not within reach of "the natural man" but possible to all who were instructed of the Spirit. Such bickerings and quarrelings were also clear evidence that something was vitally wrong with their Christian experience; they made impossible the indwelling of the Spirit. Hence, he exhorted them to put away all such things in order that Christ might dwell in them in the very deed.[17]

Social Purity. Business Relations.

The next two chapters deal with two very practical problems, social purity and business relationships. In the question of social immorality, Christianity grappled at close range with per-

[16] 1 Cor. 7:1; 8:1; 16:1. [17] 1 Cor. 1:10-4:21.

haps its most difficult problem. Other religions had not made war on such sins; some had even encouraged them. What would young Christianity say to them? Without hesitancy or indecision she declared herself relentlessly against all these impurities. Hers was the message of a new life. The body is holy and sacred as God's temple and must not be defiled; such defilement forfeits the presence of the Spirit. As for business, the apostle said a Christian was to be a brother in business relations as well as elsewhere; he was to carry his religion into his business and avoid all unscrupulous dealings, sharp practices, lawsuits, etc.[18]

Marriage and Divorce. The marriage question, discussed in chapter seven, was closely related to that of personal purity and chastity. There were some extremists among the Corinthian Christians who wanted to forbid marriage and the marriage relation as sinful. Paul refused to countenance such a position; he did not forbid marriage nor did he require those married to separate; he spoke most positively against divorce. Marriage was sacred to him, as we can see, when he uses that relationship to ilustrate the relationship existing between Christ and His Church.[19] However, he did advise, that, with the end so near, it would be better for Christians to follow his example and remain unmarried.[20]

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[18]1 Cor. 5:1-6:20. [19]Eph. 5:25, 29. [20]1 Cor. 7:1-40.

The Law of Christian Liberty.

Should a Christian eat meat which had been used in sacrifice to idols and then afterward offered for sale in the market? This was the next question considered. Some advanced thinkers, recognizing in the light of gospel instruction the foolishness of idolatry, said they saw no harm in eating such meat and did so; some possibly had done so openly at a banquet in a temple or in the home of heathen friends. Others had not yet come to this point and felt that such examples were a temptation to them to backslide into idol-worship. The apostle laid down no hard and fast rule in the matter. He was not willing to play conscience for another and dictate to another concerning his Christian liberty. Theoretically, the position of "the strong" was correct; idols are nothing and meats are only meats; some could eat idol-meat without injury to themselves; but that was not the whole question; the interest of others was involved; a "weaker brother" might be endangered by such example. Which should be the greater consideration, my right to eat meat or my care for my brother? So, over against the law of personal liberty, Paul built another law, the law of love for the brethren. This love, learned from the Christ who died for men, teaches a new rule and leads men to decide such matters not merely from their individual point of view but out of consideration for others. It makes even sacrifice in behalf of others easy. He illustrated this principle of subordinating personal rights

to the good of others by his own practice of not using his right to live at the expense of the Church in order thus to further and protect the Church's interest.[21]

Abuses in Public Services. Certain practices had found place in the public services which savored of disorder and irreverence and boded ill for the Church. First, some women of the congregation were appearing in the public services unveiled. The apostle advised against this, that they retain their veils and also remain quiet in the services. In doing so, he was not editing a fashion-plate for the ages. He was simply giving a bit of prudential advice to take care of a delicate situation. Unveiled women were recognized in the city as women whose honor was for sale; if Christian women appeared in public without veils, they ran the risk of being identified with women of that type. To prevent such a catastrophe, Paul gave the sensible advice he did; it was a matter of expediency. They were not to endanger the gospel in such an unnecessary way. The cause was to be placed first in their conduct and affection. His advice was simply this—do not do anything that will bring disrepute upon or hinder the Church.[22]

A second abuse had grown out of the custom of combining the Lord's Supper with a general supper. The practice had degenerated into mere riotous occasions of eating and drinking; class-spirit and selfishness became very apparent; the better

[21] 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1. [22] 1 Cor. 11:2-16.

class snobbishly ate of their abundance without thought of the poorer ones who had nothing. Paul called these feasts pagan orgies and said they were a desecration of the Lord's table and worse; such practices would only invite reproach and destroy the power of the public services. Again his advice was that everything be avoided that might harm the gospel or limit its power. The Lord's Supper was to be an occasion for and an aid to communion with the Lord and fellowship with each other.[23]

Spiritual Gifts. The gospel was more than a promise; it was a spiritual power realized in present possession. Every convert expected "the gift of the Spirit"; this gift was realized in various ways, prophecy, healing, tongues, etc.[24] But it was also a source of danger; it tempted to pride and rivalry and display among the members. Certain gifts, such as tongues, were set up as standards, conduced to false ideals and tempted to excess. As a result, enthusiasm that approached fanaticism, disorder, and unbrotherly comparison of gifts, had sprung up. The apostle sought to correct this by pointing out that all gifts were from one and the same Spirit and were given not for personal exaltation but for the good of the whole Church. None was to be looked down upon; every one was as necessary to the Church's life as is every organ to the body's proper activity. Loving, loyal service, not spiritual pride, is the real purpose of these gifts and their value is determined by the good they

[23] 1 Cor. 11:17-34. [24] 1 Cor. 12:7-11; Eph. 4:11.

can do. Then, the apostle showed them "a more excellent way," a gift without which all the others have no value and cannot come to their own. This best gift that supersedes all others and abides when all else has passed away is Christian love.[25]

The Resurrection. The question of the resurrection was the last one to be discussed. Doubt had arisen in some minds as to the truth of the Christian hope of the resurrection of the dead. Christ's own resurrection was not in doubt; He was so great, it could easily be conceded in his case; but it was not so easy to believe that mortals would rise. Paul first showed them what was involved in giving up this hope; with it, practically everything else was surrendered. For, if there be no resurrection of the dead, it follows that Christ is not risen, that Christian faith is false and Christian experience a delusion, that friends who have died are eternally lost to us and that sufferings and labors in behalf of Christian ideals are not worth while. But Christ is risen, Christian experience is real and faith is triumphant both in to-day's life and to-morrow's hope.

The Resurrection Body. As to the question of how the resurrection will take place or what the resurrection-body will be like, Paul did not go into details. He gave the assurance that God had already given a natural body which was thoroughly adapted to this life; so has all life been provided with an appropriate form of

[25] 1 Cor. 12:2-14:40.

body; in the life to come will God likewise make smiliar provision; a "spiritual-body" will be provided suitable for the life that is to be and adapted to all its needs. The Father who has raised Jesus from the dead and made such abundant, loving provision for the present life can be fully trusted to do the same when mortality puts on immortality. Faith giveth the victory![26]

With a word of instruction concerning the collection, several personal mentions and references, he bids them an affectionate farewell.[27]

VII. SUGGESTED READINGS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

Read: First Corinthians.

(1) How does the consideration of Paul's writings as letters affect their interpretation?

(2) Describe an ancient letter.

(3) What inference may be drawn from Col. 4:16?

(4) Why did the letters live?

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[26] 1 Cor. 15:1-58. [27] 1 Cor. 16:1-24.

VIII. PAUL— A WITNESS FOR JESUS AND THE GOSPEL.

The Testimony of His Life and Teachings.

"His Gospel." We have followed the campaigner in his restless toils while he claimed an empire for his Lord. All these activities had one single aim and for that he risked his all. Everything he had or was he invested in the gospel. For it he suffered the loss of all things, endured all things. The only wage he asked was to see men made captive for his Christ. We turn now for a closer look at the man himself, to inquire about "his gospel."[1] What was the gospel according to Paul? What did it do for him personally, what did he promise that it had power to do for others? Into what experience did he hope to bring men through the gospel? What are the most striking features of Christian experience and faith in the light of his own life and of his teaching? He bore a double testimony, his words and his life, what he said and what he was. Following a hint from the apostle himself,[2] let us begin by asking first about the testimony or witness of his own life to Jesus and the gospel. He, too, was a "living epistle"; as read by men, what did he say? It is no morbid curiosity on our part that prompts us to make this inquiry, it is simply judging a tree by its fruits. "Moral

[1]Rom. 2:16; 16: 25; Gal. 1:8; 2 Cor. 11:10.
[2]2 Cor. 3:2.

and religious prophets have to submit to a closer scrutiny; we want to see how far the ideals they proclaim were realized in themselves; for the influence they exercise upon the souls of men lies in the fact not of their teaching something but of their living something."[a]

Extremes to Be Avoided in Judging Him. What hold did the gospel take upon his own life and character? Did it have power to realize its ideals and teachings in him, to transform his life and produce those changes that would commend it to others? In such inquiry, two extremes are to be avoided; on one hand, while we recognize the marks of his humanity, we must not so emphasize them as to depreciate or discredit the gospel because it left him a veritable man and did not make him an angel; on the other hand, it is not fair to cover him with indiscriminate praise and refuse to see his short-comings as though he had already attained to perfection. Paul himself would have been the first to resent such flattery.[3] At this distance, it is not possible to reconstruct him completely; there is abundant material at hand, however to answer our inquiry concerning this witness of his life to the gospel.

The Apostle Under Fire. It would be at variance with his own confession to claim that the apostle ever realized completely his ideals; he was pressing on toward them.[4] The strain and turmoil of his nature never settled down into un-

[a]Weinel "Paul." [3]Phil. 3:12. [4]Phil. 3:14.

broken peace and quiet. The enemy could draw from him flashes of vehemence, biting irony, caustic sarcasm, and fierce denunciation that give place for an open question whether his spirit was yet completely subdued and brought under the control of his ideals. Sometimes his conduct fell appreciably below the standard of his better hours. We cannot honestly say that he was always fair to his opponents; in certain instances, he suffers noticeably in comparison with Jesus in the treatment of his enemies. At times he gave "measure for measure" and we cannot escape the impression that the opponents got as good as they gave. There are traces of harshness, even bitterness, in his treatment of the "false brethren."[5] But did man ever have severer provocations? The years through he was slandered, reproached, and misrepresented. His enemies called him a renegade and a traitor to his own people. Even Christian opponents, who did not approve of his Gentile mission, rated him only a man-made apostle,[6] without true apostolic authority or distinction,[7] and lacking proper credentials because he was not approved by the leaders at Jerusalem.[8] They accused him of preaching a false Christ and a gospel that conduced to sin by removing the moral restraints of the Law.[9] He was represented as being mercenary, calculating, and as preaching for gain;[10] even the collection was said

[5] 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Gal. 4:17.
[6] Gal. 1:11, 12.
[7] 2 Cor. 11:8.
[8] 2 Cor. 3:1, 2.
[9] Gal. 5:13-15.
[10] 2 Cor. 12:14.

to be one of his schemes for exploiting his converts; when he insisted that others should take charge of the finances, the slanderers said these workers were only tools in his hands.[11] They ridiculed his personal appearance and said his speech was rough and uncouth.[12] They called him a blusterer who wrote letters full of threats and bold words while at a distance but who was very mild and inoffensive when present.[13] They freely taunted him with being a braggart and boaster; in the last four chapters of 2 Corinthians, at least nineteen such references are to be found.

Ideals Not Perfectly Realized. They failed to put themselves in his place, to understand him or see things from his point of view. It is to be regretted that the apostle failed to some extent to do the same with them. He failed at times to appreciate their position, to realize that sometimes appearances were against him and that their accusations did not always grow out of pure vindictiveness and were not always without excuse. His manner of defense in places played into the enemies' hands and furnished them ammunition. On some occasions he seems unnecessarily defiant and invites opposition; on others, he pleads too vehemently for credence and acceptance. His enthusiasm sometimes approaches the violent and leads him into expressions that fall below his best.

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[11] 2 Cor. 12:16, 17, 18. [13] 2 Cor. 10:9-11.
[12] 2 Cor. 10:10; 11:6; 1 Cor. 2:3, 4.

His Tolerance and Patience. After all, how tolerant he was, how much he forgave, what patience and self-control he showed! The vehemence and passion of his self-defense were not due to personal hatred or vengeance; in contending for his apostleship and authority he was contending for his gospel and the freedom of the Gentile Churches. "His opponents were most unscrupulous in their method of undermining his authority and appeared to him to challenge what was most essential in his Christian faith; interests, for which he was willing to lay down his life, were at stake."[b] Under such circumstances, facing such antagonism and unfair treatment, with so much at stake, is not the real wonder that he so seldom fell below the ideal, that he exercised such marvelous self-control and such graciousness of spirit? Where did the passionate Pharisee of intolerant rabbinical training learn his gentleness, his tolerance, where did he gain the strength to subdue and control himself in such situations save through the gospel of the Christ?

His Holy Enthusiasm. His life bears great witness to the gospel's power in the completeness with which it claimed him. His harp had but a single string—the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was fired with a holy enthusiasm for the Cross. He did not try to serve two masters; there was but one for him, so thoroughly had Jesus taken possession of him. Nor was it a blind

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[b] Garvie, "Studies of Paul and His Gospel."

enthusiasm that paid this tribute to the power of the gospel in undivided loyalty and heroic service. It was no child's play to persuade a man like him to forsake his old faith and adopt the new. What took place at Damascus was more than emotional experience; the "heavenly vision," the "revelation of Jesus Christ" did not overpower him and sweep him into the new life without his consent; on the contrary, he plainly implies that his willing obedience was given. The gospel appealed to his emotions and gave him the love and peace of God which pass understanding;[14] it also convinced his judgment and good sense and claimed his power of will. The conversion was more than sentiment. It was intelligent choice and deliberate obedience. The whole man was made captive; yea, and kept captive. Out of his deep conviction of the gospel's power and truth and worth, he deliberately surrendered his life to it, yielded it his willing obedience and consecrated to it his loving service. It was worth all he had to give. So real was his experience in Christ that he offered his life a reasonable service to bring the same experience to others. And when he had done all, he called himself an unprofitable servant; he had done so little compared with what he wanted to do for the gospel's sake. Such devotion, such love, and such enthusiasm are their own testimony to the power of the cause or of the person that can call them forth.

[14]Eph. 3:19; Phil. 4:7.

The Man of Faith. Paul is a hero of faith. Possibly the world knows him best as the apostle of faith. We are not thinking of him now, however, as the teacher of a great doctrine so much as of the man who exercised great faith, of the man who had superb confidence in God. Through the gospel he had the doctrine of faith as the only condition of salvation; through the gospel also came this hold on God that enabled him to undertake and accomplish great things. He was sure of God; he was certain of the gospel's power. Because of this bold confidence, he dared project the great campaign for the evangelization of the world; because of this certainty in the gospel, he dared go out and hold before men such ideals as he did. He was no impractical enthusiast, no idle dreamer; he knew his world and the people with whom he was dealing; their sins stood out in lurid clearness before him. And yet, despite this, he dared hold up before them the gospel's noblest ideals and highest principles. He was confident that the gospel was God's power unto righteousness to redeem even the vilest. Men, with a grip like this on God, dare lead the way and set ideals that were madness to a smaller faith. It lends strength, too, for the task. Before it dangers, discouragements, and hindrances that block the way for other men give way and lose their power to halt. It never knows the handicap of doubt. It brings things to pass and secures the final triumph because it believes they

are possible and refuses to be baffled or turned back. It wins the field against all odds.

Strength in Weakness. It is a safe inference that the apostle was not strong physically. His body was only "an earthen vessel,"[15] only a tent easily destroyed;[16] sickness and disease left their mark upon him.[17] He had "his thorn in the flesh" to baffle him.[18] Whether this was eye-trouble, epilepsy, disfigurement due to disease, or some particular personal weakness—and all have been urged—it meant both pain and embarrassment. The thrice-repeated prayer to be delivered from it brought answer only in power to endure it. Recount the list of sufferings related to the Corinthians.[19] Recall the stupendous labors of the man in his campaigns. He was "pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto dispair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed."[20] "Bearing about in his body the mark of the Lord Jesus,"[21] hungry, thirsty, naked, reviled, without certain dwelling-place,[22] he certainly "endured hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."[23] What a contrast between his weak body and his power to endure! Whence this strength, this power of endurance? It is not enough to say he was wiry, strong of will, and determined. He was, but that was not the secret of his strength. It was the man's splendid faith in God, his experience "in Christ" that equipped him for all these experi-

[15] 2 Cor. 4:7.
[16] 2 Cor. 5:1.
[17] Gal. 4:13; 2 Cor. 4:10.
[18] 2 Cor. 12:7.
[19] 2 Cor. 11:23-32.
[20] 2 Cor. 4:8, 9.
[21] Gal. 6:7.
[22] 1 Cor. 4:11.
[23] 2 Tim. 2:3.

ences, that enabled him to rise above discouragements and made him strong to endure. This the gospel brought into the campaigner's life, this certainty of God, this faith for things to be done and this strength for the task.

His Lovableness. Someone has said that possibly no man was ever so cordially loved and at the same time so thoroughly hated as was Paul. The hostility of his foes has been sufficiently dwelt upon. He also made friends; there was that about him to attract men and make them love him. The devotion of his friends far outweighs the hatred of his foes. We are glad the gospel inspired his faith, emboldened his confidence in God, made him patient and tolerant under fire and gave him strength in weakness; all this receives the touch of beauty and charm needed to complete it when we see that the gospel made him lovable, gentle, and a good friend. His heroic character is greatly enhanced by the gentler virtues, love's manifold graces. He was as affectionate and kind as he was strong and brave. How great he was in loving appears in his every letter. There is something most winsome in hearing the old campaigner sing his matchless song of love. He sang well, because he loved well. This power of "loving and being beloved" intimates what the apostle learned in the school of the Spirit.

The Mystic. The campaigner was, above all else, the *man who kept fellowship with Jesus Christ.* Through this came his faith and

confidence in God. Through Christ had God come into his life. Union with Christ was the outstanding fact in his experience. Of no other fact was he so conscious as of his experience in Christ. It is the most characteristic feature that comes to expression in his writings. So close and so positive was his sense of union that he spoke of his death, burial, and resurrection in Christ.[24] Christ lived in him,[25] spoke to him,[26] and spoke through him.[27] Because of this insistence upon his union with Christ, he has been freely referred to as a mystic. And a mystic he was. Why not? In the essential meaning of the term a mystic is simply one who believes that he can enter into intimate relation and hold communion with the invisible, the infinite. As a sober fact, every Christian is a mystic to the extent that be believes he can hold communion with God. Very unfortunately, however, mysticism has kept bad company and fallen into disrepute. The idea has been abused and carried to fanatical extremes by some who claimed a communion and acquaintance with God that practically amounted to being identified with God. This has resulted in all sorts of wild and extravagant statements and behavior, so that, for many minds, "a mystic has come to mean one who is dreamy, moon-struck, speculative, and impractical." Paul was no mystic of that type. He knew the rapt experience that brought him to the third heaven where he heard

[24]Rom. 6:3-11.
[25]Gal. 2:20.
[26]2 Cor. 12:9.
[27]2 Cor. 5:17.

things not to be told,[28] but it did not make him fanatical or cause him to lose his poise or balance. He spoke with tongues more than they all,[29] and at the same time rated that gift the last in the catalogue of spiritual gifts.[30] His visions and "abundance of revelations" left him thoroughly sane, free from self-centered individualism and morbid introspection.

The Practical Mystic. His mysticism added red blood to his veins and prepared him to take a man's place in the world and to do a man's work. In other words, he was a *"practical mystic,"* as Lord Roseberry said of Oliver Cromwell. Brother Lawrence would say, he "practiced the presence of Christ." While he used most freely the mystical phrase to be "in Christ," he gave it a very practical meaning. To be in Christ meant for him to keep fellowship with Christ; it never once implied being absorbed into or becoming identified with Christ so as to lose his own personality. He kept fellowship with Christ very much as one friend keeps fellowship with another. It was possible only on the ground of having much in common, a community of interests, sympathy of spirit, harmony of purpose and plan, and likeness in character. It would be out of the question for anyone to talk of fellowship or union with Christ who was not in sympathy with him, who did not love the things of Christ and who was not interested in the plans he would see realized. Christ lived in Paul because

[28]2 Cor. 12:2-4. [29]1 Cor. 14:18, 19. [30]1 Cor. 12:28.

Christ's ideals, Christ's hopes, plans, and purposes, the Christ-life and character had found a place and were being perfected in him.[31] He says, "We are dead unto sin,"[32] "we have put off the old man;"[33] these are only the mystic's way of stating a very plain, ethical fact. "Sin" and "the old man" are his terms for indicating the old principle of conduct, the old type of character, the old way of living before Christ came, the things that formerly held sway in and governed his life. He died unto them in the sense that he passed from under their dominion and power; "sin no longer reigns or has dominion over us."[34] The old way of living had ceased. Along with pardon came freedom from sin and power for a new life. So completely was this true, so conscious his pardon, and so positive his evidence of the new life, that he could truly say he had died unto the old. His mysticism had hands and feet and produced very concrete results. It made Christ a living reality, present in his life. Through it his life was conformed more and more thoroughly unto Christ's. He must be like Christ in order to keep fellowship with him. Through this communion came to him his clear insight into things eternal, his certainty of God, his assurance of victory, and his strength for daily need. This presence of Christ was his greatest inspiration and made him sufficient for all his heroic tasks. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me."[35]

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[31]Gal. 2:20; 5:16; Rom. 8:4, 7, 9; Phil. 2:5; 4:8.
[32]Rom. 6:2. [33]Eph. 4:22. [34]Rom. 6:12, 13. [35]Phil. 4:13.

How He Maintained His Fellowship with Christ. This experience in Christ was not an occasional, intermittent, unreliable one. It was a permanent life-principle. But it had its conditions. The mystic must carefullycultivate and maintain his fellowship with Christ. The Spirit never remains an unwelcome guest. How did he do it? The letters let us into the secret. He was a man of prayer; every letter is in part a prayer. He enjoins his converts to be "instant in prayer"[36] and to "pray without ceasing."[37] This intimates that he was himself much in prayer and knew the value of prayer as a working force in life. It was for him a means of vital communion with God, of getting God and keeping God for the hourly need and the daily task. He kept it, too, by "guarding his heart and thoughts,"[38] by thinking on things true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.[39] To retain his guest, he watched zealously the purity of his inner life "casting down imagination and bringing every thought captive to Christ."[40] He knew the quiet hour and the practice of setting his mind on the things that are above and seeking the same.[41] He also "practiced the presence" by obeying God, by yielding himself in willing service to God, and by coöperating with God in all His holy will.

[36]Rom. 12:12.
[37]1 Thess. 5:17.
[38]Phil. 4:7.
[39]Phil. 4:8.
[40]2 Cor. 10:5.
[41]Col. 3:2.

His Christ. The campaigner's own life furnishes, thus, a striking demonstration of what the gospel did for one man and what it promises to others. With this hasty glance at the testimony of his life we turn now to inquire about the testimony of his teachings. Here the first mention belongs to the place he gave Jesus. The letters show quite clearly that he was familiar with the facts of Jesus's life; it is a matter of frequent mention that he makes such very little use of or appeal to the same. His Christ, the one he knew and the one he offered men, was not a mere historical character. He was that, but more! According to his teachings, Christ is a present, personal power who is to-day entering into fellowship with men, just as real, though unseen, as when he called The Twelve. It is not enough to know the story of His death and resurrection. This is *to know about Him.* Paul wants men to *know Him.* He is within reach and can be known. His presence in the daily life is the great fact of Christian experience; to profess the Christian life without it is like giving the Hamlet-play and leaving Hamlet out. The teaching bases in the apostle's own experience of mystical union with Christ. To others would he have the Lord the same living presence and power that He was in his life.

Insistence on Personal Experience. Paul knew no substitutes for a personal Christian experience. The gospel for him was something far greater than any intellectual system or code of religious instruction. It meant life, a

life measured by ethical and moral standards and transformed with spiritual light. Life is more than doctrine and conduct than any creed. The gospel's promise was ideals and power for new living; this was made possible through the "indwelling Spirit," through the personal Christ. We find in his writings two expressions which might be regarded as his tests for Christian experience; one was to be "in Christ"; the other to "have the Spirit." They were his sign-manuals; one who could not confess to them could not meet his measure of a son of the gospel. They were inseparably connected with conduct and life. The evidence of their possession was changed character. It was useless to claim to be in fellowship with Jesus or have the indwelling Spirit and not manifest the same in "the fruits of the Spirit." Where Christ abides there will His likeness appear. Paul made very practical use of all this. We called attention to the very limited appeal he makes to the story of Jesus, in disciplining and exhorting his converts. He did something better; he appealed to a more concrete and a stronger motive. He appealed to their experience in Christ and made it plain as noonday light that they could not hope to have Christ abide in their lives or to enjoy His fellowship unless their lives were fit places for His indwelling. The great penalty for unclean living, impure thinking, unbrotherly conduct, and sinful behavior of every kind was the loss of the Lord's presence.[42] They could

[42] 1 Cor. 6:15; 2 Cor. 6:15, 16; Rom. 8:13, 14.

not expect Him to be with them under such conditions. What a motive power for careful living and loving faithfulness! Need we marvel that His message exercised such miraculous power in transforming character! Here is the great secret of that religious ethical power of the early Church which enabled it to be victorious in conflict with paganism.

Religion Personal. This emphasis upon the experimental makes religion a very personal affair. Rites, ceremonies, creeds, and doctrines have their part and importance; they are the instruments of religion, not religion itself. It is essentially a matter of the personal relationship between God and the believer and between the believer and his fellow men. Its highest conception is fellowship with the Heavenly Father and love for the brethren that expresses itself in loving service. It must always express itself, teaches Paul, in terms of experience and character. The last test of every religion is the type of character or manhood it produces in its devotees. The faith that really saves must be the faith that is powerful to create and perfect character. A new faith, new teachings, new ideals count for little until they have been woven into the warp and woof of daily living upon the loom of experience; the finished product is seen in the texture of human character, its service and its love.

The Cross of Christ the Revelation of God.

Now, every religion offers to find the way to God. It is religion's chief business to reveal God and bring Him near. All the world wants to know whether we may find and know Him. "O, that I knew where I might find him!" Our apostle gives the assurance that in Jesus Christ the believer finds God. "God was to him more than an intellectual necessity; he was a resting place for his heart." To the asker after God Paul points out Jesus; to the seeker after God he brings the preaching of the Cross. The gospel's great revelation about God was the cross of Jesus Christ. Paul could not look long at Jesus without seeing the cross nor could he talk long about him without mention of the cross. God was in Jesus reconciling the world unto Himself.[43] In the cross stood revealed the exhaustless love of the eternal Father who spared not His own Son that He might redeem the world;[44] there is the pledge that nothing should be left undone that God can do to bring many sons unto glory. Time was when for the zealous Pharisee that cross was only a stumbling-block and offense; when, to call the Crucified the Messiah, was black blasphemy and dire disloyalty to God and the Fathers. When the light came to clear his vision and he lost sight of the expected Messiah in the Saviour he had found, the cross took on new meaning. In it, the Christian prophet saw God's love

[43] 2 Cor. 5:19. [44] Rom. 8:32.

manifesting itself toward mankind. In the cross he found a new God, at least he learned to know God as he had not learned of him from Gamaliel. Now he saw that God had always cared for men, from eternity had purposed their salvation.[45] But His love must not be so manifested as to throw shadow upon His holy character or give any wrong impression as to the seriousness of sin and the worth of moral values. Sin was a sad reality and was not to be remitted indifferently or as though it was of no great significance. God gave Jesus, teaches Paul, to die on the cross, that thus provision might be made whereby God could pardon sin and still show its awfulness. In the cross is a loving God's eternal protest against sin, here the price of saving from sin, but transcendently above that the cross blazons forth before the ages the great love wherewith God has loved mankind and striven ceaselessly to redeem it and bring it unto himself. It costs even God to love; the cross is the measure of the sacrifice of eternal love. It knows no limit; counts no cost; pours itself out in boundless, endless measure, and halts only when there is nothing more to do or give. Through the cross God offers the world salvation, pardon, peace. Through it man finds escape from sin and the power for a new life. Thus God woos men from sin, from their lower levels unto sonship in Himself. And he who learns from God the way of love learns also the way of the cross. That only is

[45]Col. 1:26.

true love which asks to serve and is ready to sacrifice. Loving service to the glory of God in behalf of others is a true mark of the Pauline Christian.

Justified by Faith. The Christ and all the saving benefits of His life and of His cross are freely offered on the simple ground of faith. Paul gave his best strength to overthrow the old, legalistic, bargaining conception of religion. His gospel was a free gospel whose one condition was faith in Jesus Christ. "Justification by faith" might well be called his coat-of-arms. Justification was an old theological term, borrowed from the courts; it dealt with the question how a man could be acquitted, how he could have a good standing before God. Paul's gospel teaches that God has always wanted to forgive—to acquit men, and has provided a way for doing it in the Crucified. They exercise faith who dare believe God is of such character and who simply accept as a free gift what God has lovingly made possible in Jesus Christ and offers to the world without price. Thereby such declare that they give up all other means of salvation and stake their all upon the Christ of God. In trustful, all-surrendering, self-committal, they act on the gospel's word, believe in the goodness of God and commit themselves unreservedly to His saving and keeping power in Christ.

The Family of God. Those who share this experience in Christ built for Paul one great family, the family of God on earth, the household of faith. He loved to speak of believers forming one body of which Christ was the head; or, again, to speak of them being a temple for the indwelling of Christ. He did not formulate a fixed conception of the Church in any ecclesiastical sense. He knew only little bodies or communities of believers who had a common experience that bound them as no ritual or creed or external authority could. They had a common master, their one Lord and Redeemer. They had one Spirit in whom they lived. The apostle called them brethren, citizens of the heavenly kingdom.[46] For him their association made one great brotherhood which was as compactly joined together in love, fellowship, and community of interest as the members of the human body. In the fervor and heat of a Christ-enkindled love they were welded into one great family. In their mystical union with Christ they were brothers one to another and sons to God. Organization was only begun. They had problems and met them, as we have seen, by the Spirit's help and guidance. Their problems were all settled in the certainty of fellowship with Christ and in the light of gospel truth. This was the campaigner's great ideal for Christian believers, his ideal Church, in which the Spirit's control should be complete. His ideal is yet to be realized.

[46]Eph. 2:6-22.

His Bequest. We began our study by saying that Paul was a citizen of the first century; he belonged there; but the age passed and the man still lives. He belongs to all the centuries for he has enriched them all. We know not where he sleeps but we do know that he left a bequest to the Church and to the world that ranks him chief among prophets and apostles. Christianity's debt to him cannot be reckoned. There was the temporary in his service; there was also that of abiding and eternal worth. It was his signal service to champion the cause of the Gentiles and by so doing save Christianity from becoming or remaining a Jewish sect. In winning Gentile freedom from Jewish restriction and exclusiveness he brought Christianity to her own as the Good-News for mankind. His strong hand, too, broke the bonds of legalistic and mechanical conceptions of religion and sent the new faith forth into the world as a gospel of God's free grace and love, a religion of the spirit. He gave the young gospel her first expression in terms of the world at large. All unconsciously he formulated her truths and gave statement to her teachings which the Church has not outgrown. He was her first great writer and theological thinker and we still await his master. With the vision of the Jewish prophet, the skill of the Greek thinker and the diplomacy of a Roman campaigner, he saw the possibilities of the gospel for mankind and proceeded to give the world the answer to its needs in Jesus Christ. It

was his to pass his visions and labors on, to convince others of the gospel's worth and power and meaning so that they, too, gave their lives a living sacrifice to hasten the day when the kingdoms of the world should be the kingdoms of his Lord. And when the old campaigner had finished his course and the time of his departure was at hand, his bequest unto the world was the witness and testimony of his life and teachings to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Unto those who were to follow him he bequeathed his teaching, his revelation, his ideals, his example, his labors, his conquests, his gospel, and his Christ. Yes, and he also bequeathed unto us his apostolic succession, for he bids us imitate him in knowing, loving, and serving the Christ.

VIII. SUGGESTED READINGS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

Read: Rom. 6:1-23; 2 Cor. 11:23-32; 1 Cor. 2:1-16.

Weinel: St. Paul the Man and His Work, Pages 364-373.

(1) How did Paul's life bear witness to the gospel?

(2) Is "fellowship in Christ" practicable for daily life? Discuss.

(3) What is the emphasis in such references as 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15?

(4) Name some of the teachings he would make more prominent in his missionary-preaching.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASS HELPS.

A good map.
Bible—American Standard Version.
Some good Bible Dictionary.
Hall: Historical Setting of the Early Gospel.
Gilbert: The Student's Life of Paul.
Ramsay: St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen.
Deissmann: St. Paul.
Weinel: St. Paul the Man and His Work.